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Marxism Today

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MICHAEL A. COHEN	CULTURE AND SOCIALISM
J. REID	THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM TODAY
——	THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S POLICY ON NATIONALISATION
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Marxism Today

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Menshevik History Warmed Up

Andrew Rothstein

Changes Brought by Socialism

ON April 22nd, the people of the Soviet Union—with Socialists and Communists in many other countries—commemorated the 90th anniversary of the birth of Lenin. They did so, not as that of a "saviour from on high", but as that of a great Marxist thinker and founder and builder of a political party which first led the working class of a vast country to the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of a government serving the workers and peasants, and the first steps to socialist society.

The people of the Soviet Union had only to look around them to see the results they had achieved by following the policy of the Communist Party.

Under the rule successively of the Tsar (i.e., the great landowners) and the capitalists (the Provisional Government of 1917), Russia had been a country which was industrially falling more and more behind the other great powers, and was dependent more and more on the investment of foreign capital for its economic development. "Predominantly agrarian at a low technical level", in the words of a non-Socialist American demographer, its economy in relation to the outside world "had many of the characteristics of a colonial economy".[1] In this respect Russia was a byword among the greater powers; and her condition led to such commonly expressed judgments as: "In the English sense, the Russians have absolutely no industrial gift whatever. They have no practical understanding of machinery or business beyond that of using other people's brains".[2] Indeed one of the best-known Russian workers' songs paid tribute to the cleverness of the "Englishman", who invented machine after machine to help him at work, while the Russian mouzhik had only his brawn and physical effort to rely on.

Today the Soviet Union's industries hold first place in Europe, second in the world. Its output of the means of production is over ninety times greater than in 1913. With the help of a huge engineering industry it has revolutionised its agriculture on the basis of common ownership. No one dares now to laugh at Soviet science and technical skill—the arrival of the new atomic ice-breaker at its permanent base in Murmansk, and the bringing down by a precision rocket of the American spy-plane near Sverdlovsk, in the Urals, are but the most recent reminders of the great transformation. It is producing seven times as much butter, four times as much meat, over four times as much sugar as in 1913, and over 50 per cent more wheat, with 2½ times as much cotton fabrics, three times as much woollens and well over six times as many pairs of boots and shoes.[3] Yet of the forty-three years since the revolution of 1917, over twenty-one years were times of war and reconstruction after war.

It is common knowledge that this transformation was planned, and its carrying-out inspired, by the Communist Party.

The condition of the working class in the Tsarist Empire was notorious. "The lower classes live in unspeakable poverty and destitution";[4] ". . . disregard on the part of the employers for the dignity of human life . . . sweated labour often performed amid surroundings of a degrading and dehumanising character";[5] in districts "remote from the centre", the employers "bribe the administrative authorities and engage in systematic and brutal exploitation", while in St. Petersburg, the capital, the workers "live poorly at the best . . . on herring, black bread and tea, with various additions proportioned to their earnings . . . [since 1905] they have formed trade unions which, after a short period of work, were suppressed by the government";[6] ". . . the working day for labourers engaged exclusively for day work must not exceed 11½ hours and 10 hours on Saturdays . . . the average *monthly* wage in all industries in Moscow [1911] was 19 roubles 43 kopeks" (i.e., 41s. 4d.);[7] ". . . conditions of the employment of labour are so bad that they preach in themselves, without books and pamphlets"[8]—such were the contemporary

[1] Lorimer, *The Population of the Soviet Union* (1946), p. 28.
[2] Stephen Graham, *Changing Russia* (1915), p. 208.
[3] *U.S.S.R. in Figures in* 1959 (Russian, 1960), pp. 40, 80, 82.
[4] Baedeker's *Russia* (1914), p. liv.
[5] *White Paper* (Cmd. 1240) published by British Government, 1921.
[6] Harold Williams, *Russia of the Russians* (1914), pp. 387, 420-1, 422.
[7] *Russian Year Book*, 1913 (Eyre & Spottiswoode), pp. 677, 687.
[8] Stephen Graham, *Changing Russia* (1915), p. 11.

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accounts by people on the whole favourable to Tsardom.

Today there are no "employers": the managers of Soviet factories are in the main ex-workers, old trade unionists, appointed by the state but subject to trade union approval. The Soviet trade unions, numbering over 53 million members out of 56,300,000 wage earners, have immense power in public affairs: they control social insurance, factory inspection, health resorts, supervision of shops and restaurants, through millions of their members elected for the job or as volunteers. Sixteen million workers are already on a seven- or six-hour day: by the end of 1960 the other 40 millions will be, too. There has been no unemployment since 1930. Women have the rate for the job. Wages, in real purchasing power, were 3.9 times as high in 1959 as in 1913.[9] The worker's family now eats meat, fish, eggs, butter in quantities which the pre-revolutionary generation could not dream of: and every trade union visitor to the U.S.S.R. knows the cheap and abundant canteens. The theatre and concert hall, the factory club and the public library, are part of everyday life for the Soviet worker.

The peasantry—three-quarters of the population—lived even worse. "Before the war the Russian peasant passed an existence of privation in everything except vodka. His body was roughly clad. Bare necessities, reduced to a minimum, supported life. His soul was steeped in ignorance. Vodka, obtainable in unlimited quantities, supplied his only distraction";[10] ". . . the state of public health in the provinces is due not only to bad sanitation and unhygienic conditions, but also to the absence of medical aid. . . . The average daily rate of payment for an able-bodied agricultural labourer (man) in the more prosperous parts during the heat of the harvest was from 1 rouble 20 kopeks to 1 rouble 50 kopeks [i.e., from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 2d.] per day";[11] ". . . the peasants frankly admit that it is not an unmixed evil if one of the children dies. . . . Black bread is the staple, and the peasant can do an enormous amount of field work on black bread alone. . . . The peasant eats meat rarely, as a rule only on festival days. . . . To drink there is plain water and tea";[12] "Strikes of agricultural labourers were prohibited by law."[13] Stephen Graham, a fervent admirer of Tsarist Russia, noted that on the railways, "since the peasants can't read, it is impossible to stop the men crowding the women's compartment."[14]

And today? One of the reasons why the Soviet Union is not exporting the quantities of grain, eggs and butter that Tsarist Russia used to do [in the days when the most reactionary newspaper, *Russkoye Znamya,* wrote in 1912: "We feed, shoe and dress the whole of Europe, while we walk about ourselves barefoot, naked and famished"] is that the peasants are now eating them. A visit to any collective farm shows it. Take any journal professionally concerned with trade in the countryside—for example, that published by the Soviet Co-operative movement—and you will see that all over the U.S.S.R., in the most remote backwoods, the collective farmers expect their village shop to sell them good quality cloth, silks, men's suits and shirts of modern style, furniture, perfumes, fountain pens, books of all kinds: in short, all the things that a peasant could not dream of when *The Times* published its *Book of Russia.* Their average income per head in 1959 (in comparable prices) was 4½ times as large as in 1913.[15] Infant death rate under twelve months in 1913 was 273 per 1,000, and in 1958 40.6.[16] Every week you can read in the local reports news of village clubs, village public libraries, art galleries, hospitals being opened. Without having reached the town level in amenities, the collective farmers are well on the way.

Government, Tsarist and Soviet

How were the peoples of Tsarist Russia governed? True, after 1905 they had a "State Duma", which modern whitewashers like to represent as a parliament; but in reality it was the Premier himself, Kokovtsev—and he should know—who, in a speech there, said (April 24th, 1908): "In Russia there is no Parliament, thank God." And this was not surprising. As a result of a complicated system of indirect election by classes, with administrative pressure "exercised through all stages of the elections", the big landowners "are almost certain to secure a majority, and the peasants returned are usually those who seem to the landowners fairly safe". In fact, outside the Duma the opposition parties —particularly the Socialists—could not exist legally at all and their papers were constantly being confiscated.[17] No more than 17 million—11 per cent of the population of the Empire—

9 *U.S.S.R. in Figures in* 1959 (1960), p. 224.
10 *"The Times" Book of Russia* (1916), p. 220.
11 *Russian Year Book,* 1913 (Eyre & Spottiswoode), pp. 676, 689.
12 Harold Williams, *Russia of the Russians* (1914), pp. 338, 339.
13 James Mavor, *Economic History of Russia* (1914), Vol. II, p. 480.
14 *Changing Russia* (1915), p. 243.
15 *U.S.S.R. in Figures in* 1959 (1960), p. 226.
16 Ibid., p. 241.
17 Harold Williams, *Russia of the Russians* (1914), pp. 80, 82, 113.

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could cast a vote. Moreover, as Stephen Graham wrote, the elections in 1912 (the last) were ". . . cleverly contrived: first tens of thousands of candidates are nominated, and half of them are objected to and disqualified as not fit persons."[18] Moreover, the Duma was a purely advisory body, and the Tsar by edict could overrule any opposition on its part—and did.

The real government of the country was exercised by the Tsar, through the governors of provinces—large landowners—the police and gendarmes, and the "Zemski Nachalniks" — local autocrats, appointed from among the local landed gentry by the governor, with full powers to dictate to the peasantry. V. E. Romanovsky, a very orthodox writer on constitutional law, in a textbook officially sanctioned for university use, wrote in 1911 that the institution of the 2,900 Zemski Nachalniks and analogous officials "was, on the one hand, calculated to restore and reinforce the feudal order in Russia shaken by the reforms of the '60's; on the other hand, it was to create, in the hands of the landed nobility, a firm authority, close to the people."[19] There were also provincial and district assemblies called *Zemstvos,* elected "in such a manner as to secure predominance for the representatives of the nobility", and completely dependent on the decisions of the provincial governor.[20] Town councils were elected on a high property qualification,[21] and their membership and decisions were subject to approval by the provincial governor. The Russian lawyer already quoted called them "a semi-public, semi-bureaucratic institution, deprived of independence, restricted in its competence, placed under strict administrative supervision, and representing the views and interests, not of the whole town population, but only of the most substantial property-owning citizens."[22]

In the Soviet Union today there are no landowners, large or small, to control elections to the Supreme Soviet, and no merchants or industrialists to rule the city councils. The legislative bodies, from top to bottom, are composed of industrial workers, collective farmers, workers in the professions and the arts and sciences, and people engaged in public affairs. All men and women have the vote, and they have the custom of publicly discussing their candidates before nominating them, and giving them written instructions about what to press for. Deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., to those of the fifteen Union Republics (and of the nineteen Autonomous Republics within them), and to the nearly 53,000 local Soviets, have very wide powers of investigation and badgering public authorities, and on the whole use them, being kept up to the mark by the citizens using the press, the trade unions, the collective farm meetings and the Communist Party. No less important (and in some ways more so) are the many fields in which voluntary work in public affairs by millions of citizens is taking the place of paid work by government officials, central and local.

These are only some of the main spheres in which, during these forty-two years, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has been applying its programme adopted in 1903 and rewritten in 1919. In all of them there is still much to criticise and much to be done. But every Soviet citizen who is not weak-minded knows very well that, without the Communist Party, the situation would not have changed essentially from that of 1913, except that in all probability large areas of the Russian Empire would have fallen under the control of Germany, Austria and Turkey, or else of Britain, France, Japan and the U.S.A., according to who won the first world war. And this was well remembered on the day that Lenin's life and work were commemorated. Soviet citizens had not the benefit of the mass of contemporary British evidence available to show the barbarism and rottenness of landlord-bourgeois Russia, from which a few examples have been quoted above. But they had far more such evidence of their own—and there are still alive thousands among them, hale and hearty, to describe for the benefit of the younger generation the blessings of "free enterprise", "private initiative", "Christian civilisation", etc., as practised by those who ruled Russia before the October Revolution, and by their Western supporters, allies and accomplices.

Mr. Schapiro's "Authorities"

You would search in vain for any mention of these changes in the bulky volume, claiming to be a history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which appeared on the day before the Lenin anniversary.[23] The supreme test of a political party is whether it has done what it has promised the people: but that aspect has escaped

[18] *Changing Russia* (1915), pp. 281-2.
[19] *State Institutions of Ancient and Modern Russia* (in Russian), p. 387.
[20] *Russian Year Book,* 1913, pp. 11, 12. The British whitewashers of Tsarism love to call them "county councils", which they did not resemble in the least.
[21] Ibid., p. 13.
[22] Romanovsky, *op. cit.,* p. 363.
[23] Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1960, pp. xiv + 631. 63s.).

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the notice of the author. Instead, his attention is concentrated from beginning to end on the alleged iniquities of Lenin and the party which he and his associates founded and built. And for his material, with such an approach, he necessarily turns to the most determined opponents and critics of the Bolsheviks. The Mensheviks and their later defenders, up to the October Revolution and a few years after; the Trotskyists, in Russia and elsewhere, for the period up to 1939; German authors, "thousands" of deserters from the Soviet forces or people deported by the Germans and induced later to throw in their lot with the Western governments, for the period of the war and afterwards—such are his principal authorities. This is not to say that he does not make use of Soviet sources as well—the works of Lenin and Stalin, minutes of party congresses and other party documents, reminiscences of Soviet writers, and so forth. But these are used only as secondary material, to illustrate the main point—and the main point comes from the enemies of the Communist Party and the Soviet State, particularly the Mensheviks.

The latter point is important, and for many readers to whom the word "Menshevik" has only some shadowy, long-dead meaning it is worth emphasising a little. From 1903 to 1917 the Mensheviks were political opponents of the Bolsheviks within the working class and what in Britain would be called the lower middle-class element of the forces hostile to Tsardom. From 1917 onwards, the Mensheviks were counter-revolutionaries, backing the Whites (as long as the latter required their help) and the foreign invaders of Soviet Russia. A few illustrations:

In November 1917, one of their leaders, Sher (head of the political department in Kerensky's War Ministry), played a leading part on the staff of the counter-revolutionary forces in Moscow —with the approval of his party leader.

In the spring of 1918 the Georgian Menshevik leaders Jordania and Gegechkori joined forces with the capitalist parties in the Caucasus (Dashnaks in Armenia and others) to form a "Transcaucasian Committee" resisting Soviet power—disarming and shooting revolutionary soldiers at Elisavetpol in January 1918, shooting peasants who seized the land, shooting workers who protested against the suppression of Bolshevik papers, and sending munitions to the White general Kaledin. At Baku they organised an attempt to kill the Bolshevik leader, Shaumyan.

At this time in Moscow the Mensheviks were "legal", and publishing a paper, *Vperyod,* which was consistently campaigning for resistance to Soviet measures dictated by the increasingly difficult economic situation, such as introduction of piecework, grain trade control, more discipline on the railways, etc.

Well-known Mensheviks Potresov and Rozanov took part in the Petrograd branch of a secret terrorist organisation "Union for the regeneration of Russia" formed at this time.

In June 1918, when there was a kulak (rich peasant) rising at Tambov, the Mensheviks issued a paper jointly with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, calling for the overthrow of Soviet power. The same month they co-operated with the S.R.s in setting up a White Government at Samara (on the Volga), relying on Czechoslovak soldiers in rebellion against Soviet power. They shot down workers and in their local paper, *Vechernaya Zaria* (June 12th), called for a regular army to fight "the commissars and their hirelings": and they co-operated with Monarchist officers in forming it.

In July 1918, relying on the same forces, the Mensheviks took part in setting up a counter-revolutionary government at Ufa, in the Urals. Their paper, *Golos Rabochego,* on July 13 supported the White Army which was being formed by Tsarist officers: the latter, led by Admiral Kolchak, finally dismissed and jailed the Mensheviks in November 1918. The same month, at Baku, the Mensheviks joined with the S.R.s and Armenian and Tartar nationalists in overthrowing Soviet power and inviting British forces from north Persia to occupy the city. At Yaroslavl, in northern Russia, they joined with S.R.s and White officers in another rising.

In August 1918, when British invading forces landed at Archangel, the local Menshevik paper *Severny Luch* welcomed them, and called on the working class to support the puppet "Supreme Administration" they set up, and to join the army, with Tsarist officers, which the invaders organised.

All through the civil war of 1918-1920 which the Mensheviks thus helped to launch, and the foreign invasion for which they helped to prepare, the Mensheviks played a double game—protesting their loyalty in Moscow but secretly maintaining communication with their regional organisations, which were openly co-operating with the Whites, and the invaders. At Kharkov their paper welcomed Denikin's army, and at Kiev their "central bureau of trade unions" (which existed only because Denikin shot all militant workers) accepted a subsidy from him. Their paper at Odessa, *Yuzhny Rabochi,* welcomed French troops, as also did their paper in the Crimea, *Priboi,* and at Kiev, *Iskra.*

Two of the most notorious "all-in" secret or-

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ganisations, planning and partly effecting risings against the Soviet power during the civil war—the "National Centre" and "Tactical Centre"—saw Mensheviks actively co-operating with Monarchists in 1918 and 1919 in a programme based on the restoration of private property in factories, land and banks, and the establishment of a military dictatorship.

It is hardly surprising that, after these and hundreds of similar experiences, the workers and peasants of Soviet Russia had very little time for the Mensheviks. Although the latter were allowed their spokesmen in Soviet Congresses (with a consultative voice, because no one would elect them) up to 1920, and in trade union conferences they had a few delegates up to the end of 1922, their last secret organisations were falling apart by the following year.

To rely seriously on the documents and memoirs of such a party is as intelligent as it would be to rely for the history of England after the expulsion of James II on the memoirs of a Jacobite refugee who got away after Bonny Prince Charlie's rising in 1715 and was living on a French pension in Paris, forty years later; or for the history of the United States after the end of the Civil War on the judgment of an unrepentant slaveowner, safe with an allowance from the influential classes in Britain who had backed the South, writing in Queen Victoria's England in 1900. And the result of Mr. Schapiro's approach is not merely to draw a picture bearing no resemblance to the real history of the C.P.S.U. in its relations with the people among whom it worked: it produces a kind of anti-history, through-the-looking-glass in character, and with an eerie, slightly lunatic effect.

This will be particularly obvious if we take some of the most outstanding critical moments in the history of the C.P.S.U., as presented by our author.

1905

Take 1905—the first great Russian revolutionary upheaval, two years after the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the second congress of the Russian Social-Democrats. Trade unions and other workers' organisations began to spring up rapidly. The Bolsheviks "either stood aloof from them or actively opposed them", Mr. Schapiro tells us (p. 67). You would not think from this, would you, that Lenin in his famous book, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (June-July 1905), advised the workers, "not ignoring the trade union movement, not refusing to make use of the least elbow-room for legality", to put in the forefront, in an epoch of revolution, the problems of an armed insurrection? Or that he welcomed the development of "a broad trade union movement" out of a spontaneous printers' strike in Moscow (October 1905)? Or that the same month he wrote that "a comprehensive discussion of the question of trade unions is now the question of the day"? Or that, in November 1905, he was opposing the idea of separate Social-Democratic trade unions and advising all Social-Democrats to join trade unions in a body, and to win support for Marxism in "the common struggle with fellow-workers, irrespective of their views"?[24] Or that in December the same year he advised the same policy with regard to other mass non-party organisation—of the peasantry, the soldiers, etc? Or that, in his programme of tactics for the 4th (Unity) Congress with the Mensheviks (March 1906) he called trade unions "the most expedient organisation of the working class for the purpose of economic struggle", and said that the Social-Democratic Party should promote the formation of trade unions, encouraging all its members to join them?[25] Or that there has been known for many years a letter of October 1905 in which Lenin directly advised the Bolsheviks in Odessa to build up trade unions as "one of the permanent, always necessary and essential expressions of the whole labour movement at all times under capitalism"?[26]

Moreover, at the first all-Russian conference of trade unions (October 1905) the Bolsheviks, though not in a majority, defeated the Menshevik proposal for a "general labour congress" with the entirely unrealistic aim in Tsarist conditions of founding a kind of Labour Party, and secured a decision to hold an all-Russian trade union congress. Scores of afterwards famous Bolsheviks played an active part in organising trade unions despite the Tsarist terror in 1905-1907—Kalinin (Petersburg metalworkers), Voroshilov (Lugansk metalworkers), Frunze (Ivanovo-Voznesensk textile workers), Fioletov, Shaumyan (Baku oil workers), and many others.

How did our author come to make such a gross blunder about the Bolsheviks' attitude to trade unions in 1905-6? Simply because he had swallowed holus-bolus the version of the Mensheviks. They were terrified of the workers drawing too "political" conclusions from the revolutionary situation, and using their newly-formed trade unions accordingly. The Mensheviks accordingly preached the neutrality of the trade unions ("no

[24] *Works*, fourth edition, vol. 9, pp. 101, 319, 344; vol. 10, p. 4.
[25] Ibid., pp. 63-4, 139-40.
[26] Ibid., vol. 34, p. 307.

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politics in the union"—a slogan not unknown in Britain), and pursued the will-o'-the-wisp of "legal" trade unionism under the Tsarist autocracy. Naturally, when the Bolsheviks put forward a very different policy, the Mensheviks falsely charged them with "opposing" trade unions or "ignoring" them.

At the end of 1905 came the culminating point of the workers' part in the revolution—the general strike and armed insurrection in Moscow, called by the Soviet on the initiative of the Bolsheviks. It was followed at once by insurrections in many industrial centres where the Bolsheviks were influential—Krasnoyarsk, Chita and Irkutsk in Siberia; the Donetz coalfield and Kharkov in the Ukraine, the great southern ports of Novorossiisk and Rostov-on-Don, the big Volga engineering town of Sormovo, etc. At Moscow itself 150,000 workers in 700 factories struck. The 8,000 of them who formed armed detachments (often passing over their rifles and revolvers to the next "shift") held out against artillery and infantry attacks for twelve days, putting up over 1,000 barricades with the help of countless other workers. Three times they captured enemy guns. Every railway centering on Moscow except one —the line linking it with St. Petersburg—was completely stopped. The city Soviet issued regulations, which were binding, affecting credit for workers in shops, bakeries, public order, disputes between employers and workmen, relief for unemployed, municipal institutions, permits for railway goods traffic, etc.[27]

What is Mr. Schapiro's summing-up of these events (pp. 69-70)? "It was a hopeless fight from the start." This is not the case: the decisive factor was the arrival of troops from St. Petersburg along the one railway that remained open. But the Menshevik leadership that continued in control of the St. Petersburg Soviet after the arrest of its first body of members (about 200 new deputies attended a session held four days after the Moscow insurrection started) did nothing to bring out the railwaymen.[28] "The detachments were heavily outnumbered by the troops, who were rapidly reinforced." In reality, most of the Moscow garrison troops were unreliable—several units had been in a state of ferment on the eve of the insurrection — the Governor-General, Dubasov, had no more than 1,350 reliable soldiers, with 2,000 armed police and the gendarmerie to "maintain order", and in the first few days he was sending appeal after appeal to St. Petersburg for an infantry brigade—"even temporarily". The day after the Petersburg Soviet had had the discussion mentioned above, Dubasov received news that troops were being sent from the Warsaw Command: "Impossible to send any from Petersburg"—so tense was the situation there.[29] "The detachments received little if any support from the population once fighting had actually started." What an extraordinary travesty! All the reminiscences of fighters who took part in the struggle speak of thousands of working men and women, students, old people and children who helped to build the barricades, disarm policemen and soldiers, run errands and supply information, tend the wounded, take in exhausted fighters for a meal and a rest—in short, all the signs of popular support for a revolutionary vanguard. The secret dispatches of Colonel Min, who commanded a regiment sent from St. Petersburg, spoke of forcing the people to take down barricades "under threats".[30] But the most striking fact is that, thanks to the help of the people, most of the members of the workers' detachments got away when, on December 18th (old style), fighting was broken off on the instructions of the Moscow committee of the Social-Democrats and the Moscow Soviet. Most of the more than 1,000 shot (including 150 women and eighty-six children) at the end of the insurrection, without trial of any kind, were not members of any workers' detachment, as eyewitness accounts made clear very soon afterwards.

How could Mr. Schapiro arrive at such a flagrant departure from historical accuracy? By accepting without question the version of the Mensheviks. They were guided in 1905 by their Liberal conception that the bourgeoisie, not the proletariat, must take the lead in the democratic revolution, and therefore restrained the Soviets wherever they could from becoming a *political* alternative to the government (just as in our own country, during the General Strike of 1926, the reformists in the General Council of the T.U.C. insisted, day in day out, that that mighty confrontation of classes was purely "an industrial

[27] Details, quoting contemporary documents, have been available to Mr. Schapiro since 1955 in C. D. Kostomarov, *Soviets of Workers' Deputies in* 1905 (in Russian), pp. 31-35 and in numerous articles in Soviet historical journals.

[28] 1905 *in Petersburg* (Russian 1925), vol. II, pp. 88-9.

[29] A survey of official telegrams at the time, printed in *December Insurrection in Moscow in* 1905 (Russian, 1920), pp. 60-187, contains a mass of documents showing the desperate anxiety of the authorities until the new troops reached Moscow.

[30] Ibid., p. 143, The chapter in Mavor, *Economic History of Russia,* vol. II (1914), which deals with the uprising, also remarks on the people's help in building the barricades.

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dispute"). The Menshevik policy paralysed the Petersburg Soviet by steering it away from insurrection at a time when it had an enormous influence in Russia—thus finally enabling the government to strike it down. Naturally the Mensheviks sought to shift the responsibility for the failure to help the Moscow insurrection from their own shoulders to those of the Bolsheviks.

The Revival: 1912-1914

After the defeat of 1905-6, there were several years of black reaction, in which the Tsar was fortified by huge loans from Paris and London. The working-class movement was terribly weakened, unions as well as Socialist parties were driven deep underground, thousands of temporary supporters abandoned socialism; and the capitalist class took advantage of this situation not only to worsen the workers' conditions but to carry out big concentrations of capital and production in a number of industries, and to attract foreign investments and loans. By 1910-11 an economic revival had begun—and the workers began to recover from the exhaustion of defeat. The year 1911 was marked by a rising wave of small strikes: in 1912 came a massacre of workers at the Lena goldfields (Siberia), protest strikes all over Russia involving 300,000 workers, and May Day strikes of over 400,000: in 1913 the total of strikers went up from a million to $1\frac{1}{4}$ million: in 1914 there were $1\frac{1}{2}$ million on strike in the first six months alone. Moreover, in these years there were thousands of peasant outbreaks, and an increasing number of soldiers' demonstrations.

The question of who could speak for the workers in such a period was decisive for the future development of the revolutionary movement. Mr. Schapiro's treatment of it (chapter 7) is characteristic.

From beginning to end he does not mention the new political situation. From beginning to end his picture is one only of intrigues, splits, mutual accusations, appeals to the Socialist International, and so forth. But he does claim that the Prague Conference (January 1912), called by the Bolsheviks, was nothing more than a "little gathering of rebels" which represented hardly more than one real organisation (p. 125), and in fact that the Bolshevik Party in Russia was "still virtually non-existent" (p. 130): at the time of the Duma elections (September 1912) even "the great majority of the Party did not acknowledge the leadership of the Prague Group" (p. 133). When the six Bolsheviks in the Duma formed a separate group from the seven Mensheviks, in 1913, "many of the workers were bewildered and outraged" (p. 136). By 1914 "the Bolshevik organisation was in a poor state" as compared with 1912, and the circulation of *Pravda* had fallen "drastically" owing to the Duma split (p. 140).

Mr. Schapiro's account is a faithful summary of the Menshevik stories, but it bears no relation to what happened. At the Prague Conference there were represented over twenty organisations (not ten, as the author says), and they existed in most of the chief industrial centres including Petersburg, Moscow, the central industrial region (Vladimir and Kostroma in particular, big textile towns), Ekaterinoslav (centre of the Donetz coalfield) and Baku. Police repressions prevented delegates arriving from the Urals. Sormovo, Lugansk and Rostov-on-Don. Reminiscences of old Bolsheviks as well as contemporary documents show that there were "real" organisations there, in spite of constant arrests, betrayal by police spies, and so forth.[31]

But the most striking evidence as to whether these party organisations existed, and whom they supported, came eight months later, at the Duma elections (the last held under Tsardom). Only in six provinces in all Russia were the workers (then only if working in factories employing over fifty) allowed to elect their own deputies—providing the "electors" whom their delegates chose (it was a three-stage affair for workers) agreed on one man, and all the other electors were politically advanced enough to stand down. Otherwise the landowner-merchant-rich peasant majority in the "electoral assembly" of the province concerned could themselves choose which of the worker-candidates would become a deputy. And in all six provinces a Bolshevik was elected! These six provinces had over a million workers: the seven provinces where Mensheviks were elected (by arrangement with the electors of other classes) had only 214,000 workers.[32] Mr. Schapiro thinks Martov scored a point when he asserted that Mensheviks voted for three of the "six": but in reality this (in conditions of police intimidation) was only extra proof of the workers' determination to have a well-known Bolshevik as their representative.

So far from most of the workers being "outraged", the six Bolshevik deputies received over

[31] Popov, *Outline History of the C.P. of Ukraine* (Russian, 1928), p. 87; Zelikson — Bobrovskaya, *Memoirs of a Rank-and-File Undergrounder* (Russian, 123), pp. 77-8, 82-3. Leaflets published by the Social Democratic organisations at Ekaterinoslav, Kiev, Ekaterinburg (Urals), Baku, Tiflis, etc. were described in No. 25 of the Bolsheviks' Paris paper, *Sotzial Demokrat* (December 21st, 1911), in a letter from Russia.

[32] The full table was printed in *Pravda,* October 18th, 1913.

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6,700 signatures to letters from groups and organisations from the main industrial centres supporting their point of view as against just under 3,000 for the Mensheviks.[33]

As for what the workers were thinking of the Bolsheviks by 1914, Mr. Schapiro has no reply except silence—as the Mensheviks in their day had before him—to the facts which follow.

In 1913 the Petersburg Metal Workers' Union was founded at an initial meeting attended by 3,000 workers—and it elected thirteen Bolsheviks and six non-party sympathisers to its executive, out of twenty-five. By January 1914 this union had grown to 10,000 members, in spite of police persecution, and was one of the leading workers' organisations.

At the beginning of 1914 the Petersburg workers' sick benefit societies (set up in the largest factories only, by a grudging insurance law of 1912) had to elect "electors" to two insurance committees—one for all Russia, the other for the city. They elected thirty-seven "Pravdists" out of fifty-three for St. Petersburg, and forty-seven out of fifty-seven for all Russia. The full "Pravdist" list was elected to both committees. At Riga the workers elected fourty-four "Pravdists" against twenty for all other groups, to the provincial committee.

The workers' press in Tsarist Russia used to publish detailed lists of donations. From January 1st, 1912, to May 13th, 1914, *Pravda* received contributions from 5,674 workers' groups, while *Luch*, the Menshevik paper, had them from only 1,421 groups. Moreover, out of 21,584 roubles received as donations by *Pravda*, only 2,650 roubles came from non-worker contributors: whereas out of 12,055 roubles received by the Menshevik paper, just under 6,760 roubles came from non-worker sources. In addition *Pravda's* majority was growing from year to year. In 1913 subscriptions came from 2,181 groups, as against the Mensheviks' 661: in the first 4½ months of the following year, the Mensheviks received 671 subscriptions, while the Bolsheviks total went up to 2,873.

In June 1914, out of twenty legal trade unions in St. Petersburg, "Pravdists" were leading sixteen (including metalworkers, textile workers, woodworkers), Mensheviks led three (draughtsmen, pharmacists and clerks), while the printers had a fifty-fifty executive. In Moscow, not one of the thirteen legal unions were led by Mensheviks.

Lastly we come to the "drastic" fall in *Pravda's* circulation. On occasions it had exceeded 40,000; at the beginning of 1914 it varied between 20,000 and 26,000, but in March averaged nearly 28,000. Mr. Schapiro, as we have seen, attributes this fall to the split between the Bolshevik and Menshevik deputies—and we have seen that this is a most improbable explanation. Mr. Schapiro has "forgotten" the much more obvious explanation—police repressions. During its first year of existence *Pravda* was confiscated forty-one times: in its second year, 116 times. Moreover, in the second year (1913-14) and up to the war it had to change its title eight times.[34] The campaign to keep up this heroic struggle brought more contributions from workers to its fighting fund—but the interruptions and changes could not but adversely affect both street sales and long-term subscriptions (customary in Russia as elsewhere on the Continent). Its readers and sellers were often prosecuted, too.

Why is it that Mr. Schapiro mistakes a rise in the Bolsheviks' influence for a fall? Solely because he has assimilated completely not only the Mensheviks' assertions but also their method of treating the facts.

After the October Revolution

This method sustains him even in later periods when there is little or no Menshevik material to guide him. I have dwelt in some detail on three periods which tested Bolshevik influence among the people before the revolution only as samples (another could well be their work during the first world war)—and because Mr. Schapiro is not alone in trying to discredit the Communist Party of the Soviet Union by suggesting that from the very beginning it was remote from the workers. The Mensheviks in those days, like their successors in Russia and elsewhere later, could never understand that, in rejecting their opportunist policies, the Bolsheviks were guided by the advice of Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* —"in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement"—and always found a response among the most militant and advanced workers, to the amazement of their enemies.

We may take, more briefly, three further critical moments in the life of the C.P.S.U., this time after the October Revolution, as Mr. Schapiro treats them, and as they really were.

The first was in the summer of 1919—the turning-point of the civil war. According to Mr. Schapiro, "the majority of the country" could be numbered among the enemies of the Com-

[33] Samoilov (one of the Bolshevik deputies) gives details in his *Return to Bygone Days* (Russian, 1954), pp. 252-254; also *Pravda* for June 26th, 1914.

[34] [Olminsky] *The "Zvezda" and "Pravda" Epoch* (Russian, 1921), pp. 49, 53.

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munists, who were "battling alone" (p. 187)—and even among the working class they had established control of nearly all trade unions by 1920 "very largely by force and electoral fraud" (p. 198).

How does he explain, then, that when at that moment the Party relaxed its rules for admission and invited workers and poor peasants to join, well over 200,000 enthusiastically entered its ranks, thousands of them in the Red Army? All he can say is that mass recruitment at such a time, when the Bolshevik regime had its back to the wall, "presented little danger of attracting the wrong type" (p. 231). Very true. But Denikin was within 250 miles of Moscow, the Moscow Committee of the Party itself was blown up by a powerful bomb, and death by shooting was the least that captured Communists could expect. One can understand that the Party wanted to strengthen its ranks; but why should workers and peasants who hated it, or had left it to "battle alone", want to join it at such a time? Mr. Schapiro has no answer.

The second was immediately after the death of Lenin in January 1924, when for the first time the Communist Party found itself without its founder and leader. At that time, according to Mr. Schapiro, the Party apparatus was distinguished by its "corruption" and "indifference to the need of the governed" (p. 228): the Soviet regime, in respect of "legal order", was worse than that of Tsardom (p. 229): the dictatorship of the proletariat "was often being exercised as much against the proletariat as against the bourgeoisie" (p. 263): the programmes of two small anarcho-syndicalist opposition groups contained "much that was likely to appeal to the workers" (p. 277): "the many discontented proletarians" saw nothing to choose between Trotsky and Stalin" (p. 280): the Communist Party was "a small minority ruling by force in the teeth of proletarian and peasant opposition" (p. 308).[35]

A terrible picture—but how does he explain the fact that, when the Communist Party on Lenin's death announced a "Lenin Enrolment" of workers—to fill the painful gap, as it were—240,000 of the most experienced and respected workers joined in three months, the majority of them in solemn and ceremonial circumstances of public acceptance? They were "young workers who could be relied upon to be amenable," he says (p. 283), and thus were "malleable recruits" (p. 310). That might explain why the Party wanted them—if it were true that they were young greenhorns, which it is not, as both the records and many personal eyewitnesses can testify. But it doesn't explain why they should join a party with all the amiable characteristics attributed to it by Mr. Schapiro—and on that he is silent.

The third occasion was during the second world war, when Hitler's invasion, after having overthrown or driven out every army in Europe which challenged him, menaced the Soviet State in even more deadly fashion than Denikin did in 1919. Everything that Mr. Schapiro said about the relations between the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet workers and peasants at that time, or in 1924, he says with even greater firmness (and self-confidence) about those relations on the eve of the war and when it broke out. Not only, he tells us, was the Party "cowed and silenced" (p. 487), and its "control" over the people "administrative rather than ideological"—i.e., it ruled by police methods (p. 494), but the Germans were received "with open welcome" or with an attitude varying "from hopeful friendliness to cautious but passive expectation". In Moscow, indeed—"a fair index" of what the population generally thought—there was no "love for or confidence in the Party" and the people "readily accepted its demise" (p. 497).[36]

How does he explain, then, that over a million Soviet citizens took up arms as partisans in the German rear? Very simply—by writing down the figure to "about 200,000" (p. 499). There were in fact 300,000 in Byelorussia alone. And how does he explain that during the war about 3,500,000 joined the Party and over five million enrolled as probationers—when capture meant death by torture or worse? Even more simply: the Party was "anxious to broaden its base" and therefore wanted "to encourage mass recruitment" in order to "restore lost confidence" (p. 522). But why should it restore confidence (or love) to be invited to join a party which you regard chiefly as an administrative machine for controlling you, whose demise you readily accept—and when you are hopefully or expectantly waiting for the Nazis to take over?

Mr. Schapiro doesn't say.

[35] To avoid repetition: this collection of charges is characteristic of the general tone of Mr. Schapiro's references to the C.P.S.U. after the revolution—as it is of the Menshevik journal published abroad from 1921 onwards, *Sotsialisticheski Vestnik*, in the vituperations of which much of our author's material can be easily recognised.

[36] It is characteristic that Mr. Schapiro bases these astonishing assertions, not on the evidence of numerous experienced foreign journalists who were in Russia in 1941-2, several of them Russian-speaking, but on compilations of the assertions of deserters from the Soviet forces or of D.P.s whom the Allies persuaded not to return to the U.S.S.R.

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The method pursued by Mr. Schapiro, with such lamentable results, is not original. To build up what seems an inescapable indictment on the basis of the stories of refugees, combined more or less skilfully with the enormous amount of self-criticism and frank admission of blunders in the Soviet press, is an old occupation. In 1919 Russian Whites and their well-to-do supporters in this country formed a "Russian Liberation Committee" which for many months published blood-curdling pamphlets and a well-printed bulletin on the same lines as Mr. Schapiro's book. It went on excoriating the inner corruption, isolation and imminent collapse of Bolshevism, until its own cause suddenly collapsed. Mr. Schapiro, in addition, has the advantage of the harsh exposure made by the C.P.S.U. in recent years of the abuses of authority by Stalin in his later years, and of the cruelties practised by the Ministry of the Interior as a result. Needless to say, he makes full use of his opportunities in this respect. But, just like all the Mensheviks, Trotskyists, Whites and deserters on whose "literature" he draws so freely, he doesn't know where to stop. Accepting their fundamental propositions, he can't imagine the giant achievements of socialism themselves—much less their continuing in spite of defects, blunders and—in the period just mentioned—gross departures from socialist principles in certain parts of the machinery of state. At bottom he is unable to see the people, the workers and peasants, refashioning society (just as his Menshevik tutors were unable)—and this is why his picture of the Communist Party is a caricature, while the workers and peasants (not only on the six occasions from 1905 to 1945 mentioned above) are constantly facing him with surprises he cannot rationally explain.

Historical Method

But it is worth while exploring a little further into the historical method imposed on Mr. Schapiro by his now quite recognisable and familiar conceptions—which he seeks in vain to sweeten by announcing, in his preface, that he has a predilection for the "old fashioned principles" of respect for human life and dignity, freedom of thought and speech, etc. Out of an immense number of examples, here are but a few:

Mr. Schapiro suggests (p. 4) that Lenin got many of his ideas from the revolutionary Narodnik Tkachov—who preached the idea of a small conspiracy of intellectuals seizing power by terrorist acts and leading the peasantry to socialism. In reality, a glance at the first volume of Lenin's *Works* would show how utterly remote such ideas were to him. In 1902 (*What Is To Be Done?*) he described Tkachov's work as "majestic"—but "a tragedy". At the Party Congress in 1906 he ridiculed the Mensheviks' attempts to attribute Tkachov's ideas to the Bolsheviks.

In 1904 the Bolsheviks in Geneva were starting their first paper, *Vperyod*. They had no money—"and private benefactors had to be found", says Mr. Schapiro in the first of many such hints. For good measure, he adds in a footnote: "There is no evidence where the funds came from" (p. 59). But there is plenty of evidence. The veteran Bolshevik Lyadov described in his reminiscences in 1926 quite simply—for anyone who has ever had anything to do with socialist papers—where the money came from: credit from a French publishing firm for the first issue, 100 roubles borrowed from a Russian girl student about to go home, and reliance on selling part of the print abroad. *Vperyod's* compositor, Vladimirov, told how Bolshevik emigrants worked as window cleaners and porters, giving "their last centimes for the paper".[37]

Mr. Schapiro says Bolshevik sources are reticent about the "private benefactors" who helped *Pravda's* funds in 1912, and particularly of the student V. A. Tikhomirnov—whose "substantial" assistance, he says, has only been mentioned once in Soviet literature (p. 130). We have seen earlier exactly what part non-workers' subscriptions played. But it so happens that Lenin's article *The Working Class and the Workers' Press* (June 1914),[38] from which some of the data quoted earlier were taken, begins its statistics with an acknowledgement that they were drawn up by "Comrade V.A.T." Thus V. A. Tikhomirnov—who actually helped *Pravda* as a volunteer—himself took responsibility for the total figure of "private benefactions": 2,650 roubles out of 21,584!

The charge of "liquidation" levelled by Lenin against the Mensheviks "was plainly false", says Mr. Schapiro. One might imagine that Lenin's detailed examination of Menshevik texts on this subject was not available in English.[39] Of course the Mensheviks themselves denied the charge—so unpopular among the workers was the idea of giving up the underground socialist organisation under Tsarist autocracy. But in April, 1914, Lenin reprinted a definition of Menshevism recently written by Martov, its leader, to a literary jour-

[37] Lyadov, *Reminiscences of Party Life in* 1903-07 (Russian, 1926), pp. 60-63; Vladimirov in *Anniversary of Lenin's Death* (Russian, 1925), pp. 105-6.

[38] *Works*, fourth edition, vol. 20, p. 338.

[39] *Selected Works*, twelve volume edition, vol. 4, (1936).

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nal.[40] Martov explained that it meant the "organisational reforming of the Party" by "intensified" activity in forming all kinds of non-Party organisations (trade unions, educational societies, etc.) and by "attempts, relying on these societies, to create an open" (i.e. legal) "labour party". Martov added that those who held these views had in polemics been called liquidators *"because of their negative attitude to surviving underground organisations"*. Mr. Schapiro hadn't noticed this document.

Dealing with the 1913 split between the six Bolsheviks and seven Mensheviks in the Duma, Mr. Schapiro gives the following summary of the charges laid by the Bolsheviks in their "ultimatum": (i) they had been "subjected" to persuasion to write for the Menshevik paper (ii) the Mensheviks had refused to have a Bolshevik as a second secretary for the united group (iii) a Menshevik and not a Bolshevik had been appointed member of the Duma Budget commission (p. 134). Sheer travesty could hardly go further. The ultimatum is printed in Lenin's *Collected Works*—for he wrote it.[41] *There is no mention whatever of the first point in it. There is not one word about an extra secretarial post for a Bolshevik.* The complaint is that the Bolsheviks had been refused *one seat out of two* in the Budget Commission—and that only one, not two, nominees had been put forward "for an important institution". Moreover, the letter complains that the seven had "repeatedly" by their majority of one deprived the six of the right to put forward one of two speakers allotted to the Social-Democrats in the Duna.

In September, 1915, the Government—hard pressed by the immense defeats suffered by the Russian Army at the front, and by growing economic difficulties—arranged for election of factory delegates to a "War Industry Committee" in Petrograd. The Bolsheviks decided to take advantage of the campaign to propagate their views on the imperialist war and to denounce the imperialist government as the real enemy of the Russian people. According to Mr. Schapiro, Social-Democratic activity inside Russia was "disorganised" during the war, and only in its later stages was there "a slight response" to the Bolsheviks' policy (p. 151). But, in fact, at the delegate conference, there proved to be sixty Bolsheviks, fifty-seven non-Party and eighty-one Mensheviks and Populists; and after the Bolsheviks had explained their attitude to the war, their resolution got 95 votes to 81. As a result of a series of large-scale arrests in November, the Bolshevik organisation was temporarily weakened, new elections were held and the Mensheviks got their majority.[42] Mr. Schapiro's revealing account of this *practical* co-operation between the police and the Mensheviks is: "in the election of delegates to the Central War Industry Committee, held in September, 1915 (after an unsuccessful attempt by the Bolsheviks to frustrate it) a strong Workers' Group of liquidators . . . was returned" (p. 153).

Mr. Schapiro repeats (p. 173) the well-worn myth that Trotsky was the chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet in October-November, 1917, and that "there is no evidence" that the Party leadership's delegation to the Committee (Stalin, Sverdlov, Dzerzhinsky, Uritsky and Bubnov) played any part (p. 174). In reality there have long been available the documents of the Committee showing that Trotsky was never its chairman, and that first a left Socialist Revolutionary Lazimir, then the old Bolshevik Podvoisky acted in that capacity.[43] Moreover, the military organisation of the Petrograd Party Committee and the "five" of the Central Committee were all functioning *before* the M.R.C. was established: in fact, Stalin and Sverdlov were present when Podvoisky and Lazimir were elected.

There is no evidence, says Mr. Schapiro (writing to all appearances in 1959), for the "assertion" of the new history of the C.P.S.U. that there were 200,000 Red Guards (armed workmen) in October 1917. He knows better; there were only 20,000 (p. 174). Summarising (and quoting) a number of detailed local studies, Academician Mintz—one of the leading Soviet historians—wrote three years ago that figures for sixty-two towns show a total of not less than 200,000 armed workers by October.[44]

Reviving once again the old nonsense about Lenin receiving money from the Germans, Mr. Schapiro (pp. 175-6) contrasts his statement in July, 1917, that he had never received money from two Social-Democrats living in Stockholm with the fact that a letter intercepted by the police—sent through the post (!) and dated April 21st, 1917—refers to "2,000" received from one of them. Mr. Schapiro omits to mention that the letter (as copied by the police) is unsigned—

[40] *Works*, fourth edition, vol. 20, pp. 239-240.
[41] Fourth edition, vol. 19, pp. 403-5.
[42] M. Fleyer, *The Petersburg Committee of the Bolsheviks in the War Years* (Russian, 1927), pp. 45-48, 50-51, 54-55.
[43] Podvoisky, *The Red Guard in the October Days* (Russian, 1927), p. 19; Piontkovsky, *The October Revolution in Russia* (Russian, 1923), p. 63; *Documents of the Great Proletarian Revolution* (minutes and orders of the M.R.C., in Russian) 1938.
[44] *Problems of the History of the C.P.S.U.* (bi-monthly, in Russian), No. 2, 1957, pp. 33-34.

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whereas the other two letters intercepted by the police were signed "V. Ulyanov": and that the style of the letter is totally unlike Lenin's, and is more likely to be that of one of the secretaries of the Party. He also fails to point out that the purchasing power of the rouble in April 1917 was barely half of its nominal value—so that the sum transferred was nearer £100 than its pre-war value. Thus, the whole transaction, far from being a "German subsidy", was obviously the transfer of a small sum of Party funds which had been left abroad when the emigrants returned after the overthrow of Tsardom—while Lenin by now had bigger things to occupy his attention.

Mr. Schapiro would have acted more like a historian, incidentally, if he had cited Lenin's letter of August 17th, 1917, and the Central Committee resolution of September 24th, 1917, which showed how violently the Bolsheviks reacted to *real* offers of *real* money, the source of which was not clear, but which might have been—in Lenin's vigorous terms—"mutual smelling-relations with the German Social-imperialists".

Mr. Schapiro refers to the Bolsheviks' coalition with the Left-Socialist Revolutionaries, from December, 1917, to March, 1918, as though it were merely a manoeuvre in the critical first phase of Soviet rule, "enabling the Bolsheviks to claim that they enjoyed peasant support" (p. 185). *Not one word* does he say about the two congresses of Peasant Soviets (November 23rd-29th and December 9th-23rd, 1917) which did precisely give that support: indeed, the Left Socialist Revolutionaries had only entered the Soviet Government after the first Congress!

We have already seen the "force or fraud" allegations about Bolshevik leadership of the trade unions. It is perhaps useful at this point to inform the reader that at the "Democratic Conference" called by Kerensky himself (September 1917) the trade unions had 120 delegates—thirty-three from trades councils representing 1,893,000 members, and eighty-seven from all-Russian unions, numbering 1,195,000 members. Not only were sixty-nine of the 120 Bolsheviks, but when it came to a resolution repudiating class collaboration in any form, i.e., repudiating support of the Provisional Government, it was carried (the railwaymen, postal clerks and commercial clerks joining the trade union group) by 140 to 23. This was a heavy defeat for the Mensheviks. By October 1917 the majority of the unions had Bolshevik leaderships—also elected without "force or fraud". And at the first All-Russian Trade Union Congress in January 1918 there were 273 Bolsheviks, 21 Left Socialist Revolutionaries and 34 non-Party, as against 66 Mensheviks and 21 of all other groups.[45]

Referring to Lenin's last writings (1923), Mr. Schapiro says that "the constant refrain" recurring through them is "the corruption of the Party apparatus"—which, he argued (according to Mr. Schapiro), was "after all only the same bureaucratic apparatus as the apparatus of the old régime" (p. 228). It is sufficient to turn to these writings—"Better Less, But Better", "How We Should Reorganise the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection", the recently published letters, etc.—to realise that our author, in the best Menshevik tradition, has carried out an operation which, for politeness' sake, we may call "sleight-of-hand": for *State* apparatus (gosapparat) he has substituted *Party* apparatus.

One could go on for many pages quoting more examples of the historical method which Mr. Schapiro has inherited from his august predecessors in the anti-Bolshevik field. wherever he strays—whether in the social analysis of the Soviet people, where "white-collar workers" suddenly appear in large numbers where public employees are concerned (even if they are factory managers or collective farm chairmen, or the technicians in Soviet factory and collective farms—a more grotesque challenge to reality than most): or whether in the field of theory, particularly of Marxism: or of plain politics[46]—the material is so abundant as to be overwhelming. He cannot understand why membership of the Communist Party in the villages fell from 800,000 in 1934 to 153,000 in 1939 (p. 455), although on the very next page he mentions the great expansion of industry and of its manpower (actually from 22 million in 1934 to 28 million in 1939). Where does he think the 6 million came from?

In his obsession with the "white-collar workers" allegedly inundating the C.P.S.U., Mr. Schapiro quotes (p. 565) the fortnightly *Kommunist* as his authority for the amazing statement that, as one-third of 15,460,000 "technical specialists" were Party members, these accounted for "5,150,000 intellectuals out of a total membership of 7,215,505, or over 70 per cent". We turn up the journal indicated (No. 11, 1958, pp. 62-63), and what do we find? That the figure of 15,460,000

[45] Pankratova, *The Political Struggle in the Russian Trade Union Movement*, 1917-18 (Russian, 1927), p. 73; and the *Stenographic Report* of the Congress, p. 350.

[46] Take, for example, this remark (for the period of the New Economic Policy): "The trade unionists never succeeded, as the Eleventh Congress had enjoined, in winning the confidence of the non-Party mass of workers" (p. 336).

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is given (p. 63), not as that of "technical specialists" in the U.S.S.R., but of "intelligentsia"—a much wider category. And that the "specialists" among whom, it is specifically stated, one-third were Party members) numbered 6,257,000 (p. 62) —i.e., 2,086,000 out of the total Party membership of 7,215,505, or under 29 per cent, came from this group. The ghosts of the Menshevik statisticians have let Mr. Schapiro down again.

But enough.

Why This Book?

It is not doing an injustice to Mr. Schapiro to say that, as a history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, his weighty tome is so much waste labour (which he must have given most conscientiously). As a compendium of all the nasty things said of the Soviet Communists by their political enemies, past and present, there is something to be said for it: one might call it a handy reference book of anti-history for both sides in the class struggle. But of course there is more to it than that.

"Habent sua fata libelli"—books have their own fate—the old Latin grammarian wrote: and their fate has to be considered quite apart from the ideas of their writers. However sincerely Mr. Schapiro may hold the furious views, and use the peculiar historical methods, of his fossil authorities —the Mensheviks, Trotskyists and D.P.s, professional or otherwise—the fate of his book was determined for him long before it was written. Here is what he says himself on that subject in his preface (written, if one knows the ways of publishers, in 1959):

"*After some three years working on this book* [my italics—A.R.] it is a great pleasure to have an opportunity at least to acknowledge some of the help and generosity of others which has made my work possible.

"The writing of this work was undertaken at the invitation of the Research Program on the History of the C.P.S.U. This Program, which is supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation, is administered by an inter-university committee. . . . The Program has helped me in many ways: it has enabled me to obtain printed or microfilm materials which I should otherwise not have been able to see, it has provided me with research assistance and with the means to travel in search of material (including a two months' stay in New York) and it has made available to me in MS the results of research or memoirs *which it has sponsored* [my italics—A.R.]" (p. xii).

Can the reader imagine why the Ford Foundation should in 1956 have made possible Mr. Schapiro's book—as it had sponsored others—more particularly as he was already the author of another anti-Bolshevik work, to which he refers more than once in his footnotes? Can he, without great additional strain on his imagination, conceive why, at the end of the same year, *Life* magazine invited a British journalist to write a popular history of the Russian Revolution, using material the collection of which it had already financed, earlier the same year? In the latter case we know the answer: "The time had come to challenge this orthodox Communist attitude towards Lenin and the Revolution".[47] Why was 1956 the time? No, it's not very difficult after all. . . .

But though the publishers, in sending out Mr. Schapiro's book for review, called it "very important", and anti-Soviet reviewers have already proclaimed it "monumental" and destined to "stand the test of time", they are as mistaken as the American "Research Program". What was planned in 1956—outside as well as inside the world of books—didn't come off. This book is a monument only to the bankrupt plans of 1956. It can no more stand the test of time than the denunciations and the prophecies of the bankrupt politicians whom the Soviet peoples have thrown on the scrapheap, or of the invaders whom they have twice expelled by force of arms. The cold war has long begun to fade—and with it will fade the importance of anti-Soviet pamphlets, whether six pages long or six hundred.

[47] Alan Moorehead, *The Russian Revolution* (Collins with Hamish Hamilton, 1958), p. 12.

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Culture and Socialism

Michael A. Cohen

CULTURE is a difficult word. It possesses a great range of connotation, and in discussing it our initial difficulty may be to decide what specifically are the cultural questions. As Marxists we no doubt wish to avoid the use of the word which narrows it to "the Arts" and associates it with the bourgeois use of "cultured". Nevertheless, when Comrade Gomulka speaks of the importance of culture it *is* "artistic and intellectual creation" to which he draws attention:

> The cultural revolution is an indispensable element of a socialist revolution. The process of the cultural revolution unfolds through the popularisation of advanced culture among the popular masses, and through the development of artistic and intellectual creation in the spirit of socialism. ("The Cultural Revolution, Revisionism and the Party", *Marxism Today*, April 1959.)

Moreover, the specific cultural issues which Comrade Gomulka goes on to raise are confined to "artistic creation" and, so far as concrete instances are concerned, to literature. I think we should avoid the tendency to narrow culture down to art, just as we should avoid discussing art too often in terms of literature alone (as in the recent discussion on "The Artist and Politics").

Yet Comrade Gomulka's reference to "artistic and intellectual creation" is a more satisfactory approach to a discussion on culture than many—provided that the words "artistic" and "intellectual" are given a Marxist area of reference. Marxist thinking requires precision in the use of terms, but culture can be saddled with implications so broad as to make it almost meaningless, or used as a substitute for a more satisfactory term. We cannot accept, for example, the use of the word peculiar to bourgeois anthropology in which "culture" defines the entire structure of a society. But uses of the word in which it appears to be a blanket term for human achievements (and hence where socialist culture is concerned, for socialist achievements) are equally questionable:

> For the Marxist, culture is not a mass of works of art, of philosophical ideas, of political concepts accumulated at the top of the social pyramid by specially gifted individuals, but the inherited solution of problems of vital importance to society (Edgell Rickword, "Culture, Progress and the English Tradition", *The Mind In Chains*, London, 1937, p. 254).

Such uses tend to obscure the essential Marxist distinction between basis and superstructure. Again, while it is important to emphasise the unity between cultural and political questions, it is wrong to do this in such a way as to obscure the distinction between cultural and other political questions, in such a way as to suggest (as we ourselves do sometimes) that culture is more than one aspect of politics.

Culture and Society

It is a desire to include politics in culture rather than the other way around, and to deny the basic role of economic relations in society, which are the chief weaknesses in Mr. Raymond Williams's recent, and in many ways excellent book—*Culture and Society* 1780-1950. Mr. Williams's chapter on "Marxism and Culture" is unusually objective for a non-Marxist academic. He shows quite a wide acquaintance with English Marxist writing on this subject—although he has missed such important contributions as the very good *Arena* publications of a few years ago which would show him that, when he criticises past British Marxist writing on literature and art for using the idea of basis and superstructure as a mechanical formula, he is rather behind the times—and behind the Marxists. Again, while he does give some valid examples of this kind of error, we cannot go along with Mr. Williams when he suggests that it is the idea of basis and superstructure that is the source of the errors, and which therefore ought to be jettisoned:

> . . . there would seem to be a general inadequacy, amongst Marxists, in the use of "culture" as a term. It normally indicates, in their writings, the intellectual and imaginative products of a society; this corresponds with the weak use of "superstructure". But it would seem that from their emphasis on the interdependence of all elements of social reality, and from their analytic emphases on movement and change, Marxists should logically use "culture" in the sense of a whole way of life, a general social process. The point is not merely verbal, for the emphases in this latter use would make impossible the mechanical procedures which I have criticised, and would offer a basis for a more substantial understanding. The difficulty lies, however, in the terms of Marx's original formulation: if one accepts "structure" and "superstructure", not as the terms of a suggestive analogy, but as descriptions of reality, the errors naturally follow. (p. 282.)

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A point to which I shall return is that Mr. Williams's refusal to recognise production relations as basic, to recognise Marx's formulation as a description of reality, not only weakens his own theory of culture but—and this is much more important—would make his fine aspirations for a democratic culture incapable of realisation, *if used as a guide to action.*

However, there are many things to admire and learn from in this book. In it Mr. Williams analyses the historical formation of the complex of ideas associated with the word culture in English, through a detailed examination of statements by important (and in the main literary) intellectuals, made over the past century and a half. Mr. Williams sees culture as the most important of five key words—the others are industry, democracy, class and art—which became crucial from the Industrial Revolution onwards. He regards the analysis of this word's development as a "special kind of map" by which the nature of the great social changes since the eighteenth century can be explored.

Capitalist Society

What the generally balanced and perceptive analyses in *Culture and Society* reveal is that culture—formulated one way or another—has been a key concept in the reaction of the British middle class intelligentsia to industrial capitalist society, and that in some cases this reaction produced observations of profundity. We recognise in reading Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Carlyle and the other nineteenth-century figures who made the early contributions to this tradition of thought, terms of social criticism to which those greater middle-class intellectuals, Marx and Engels, were to give the decisive formulation in the *Communist Manifesto.* Consider Southey (so often, as Mr. Williams points out, dismissed simply as a renegade) when he says in 1807:

> . . . it is the tendency of the commercial, and more especially the manufacturing system, to collect wealth rather than to diffuse it . . . great capitalists become like pikes in a fish pond, who devour the weaker fish; and it is but too certain that the poverty of one part of the people seems to increase in the same ratio as the riches of another.

The anarchic progress of industrial capitalism, rationalised in *laissez faire* economics and Utilitarian philosophy, was seen by these men to deny any general good or common social purpose; consequently the progress (or "civilisation" as it was often labelled) was rejected, and culture, an abstract ideal of social purpose and health, was created.

It seems to me that there are two interrelated aspects of this tradition of thought which have real importance. It was Coleridge who formulated the first one best, when he said that the development of society in the early nineteenth century was particularly inimical to what he callel "the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties which characterise our humanity", for which he used the term "cultivation" or culture. Coleridge's particular formulation seems to me to be profound for reasons which Marx and Engels, rather than any of the thinkers in Mr. Williams's tradition, were to formulate best of all. What are those qualities which "characterise our humanity", in the historical materialist view?

> What distinguishes the most incompetent architect from the best of bees, is that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he constructs it in reality. The labour process ends in the creation of something which, when the progress began, already existed in the worker's imagination, already existed in ideal form. Not merely does he bring about a change of form in natural objects, but he also realises, in the nature that exists apart from himself, his own purpose, the purpose that gives the law to his activities, the purpose to which he has to subordinate his will . . . throughout the whole duration of the labour (*Capital,* Vol. 1).

It is this capacity for purposive labour, initiated by imagination and sustained by will, which Marx regarded as the most fundamental distinction between man and beast. Industrial capitalism, which added the manufacturing division of labour to the social division of labour which had always existed in class society, accentuated the division between labour and the execution of conscious creative purposes as never before. The new proletariat, already uprooted and cut off from their forefathers' pre-capitalist cultural traditions, were also deprived of their forefathers' satisfaction in the production of commodities. Individually they were reduced to repeating a partial contribution to the production of commodities, under horrific conditions. The consequences are described by Engels:

> How much human feeling, what abilities can a man retain in his thirtieth year, who has made needle points of filed tooth wheels twelve hours a day from his early childhood, living all the while under the conditions forced upon the English proletarian? It is still the same thing since the introduction of steam. The worker's activity is made easy, muscular effort is saved, but the work itself becomes unmeaning and monotonous to the last degree. It offers no field for mental activity, but claims just enough of his attention to keep him from thinking of anything else. And

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> a sentence of such work . . . leaving him scarcely enough time to eat and sleep, none for physical exercise in the open air, or the enjoyment of nature, much less for mental activity, how can such a sentence help degrading a man to the level of a brute? (*The Condition of the Working Class in England,* London, 1936, p. 119.)

Cultural Reformism

Coleridge and his successors among British intellectuals were on to something fundamental when they spoke of culture, but lacking the insights of historical materialism, limited by the outlook and basis of their class, the great majority were unable to realise just how fundamental it was, and were able to conceive only the most abstract and inadequate basis for the realisation of what they called culture. Coleridge himself suggested that a special class called the "National Church" or the "Clerisy" should be endowed with the task of diffusing culture. Matthew Arnold, the source of some of the most persistent reactionary ideas on this question, saw the solution in extending the national system of education. Once this sort of attitude is adopted, of course, the idea that it is the basis of capitalist society itself which is the enemy of culture is out of the question. Culture has been trivialised into some sort of knowledge in individuals which may be acquired through education regardless of the fact that, even if culture is limited to education, it cannot be diffused simply through the extension of education but through the abolition of the capitalist class system of education. What Arnold's attitude amounted to is a sort of cultural reformism and it went with some typical reformist illusions about the state.

And yet there has always been a second and more general aspect of English cultural thought which saw the problem as arising from the nature of capitalism (or whatever they liked to call it) itself. Again and again, in the tradition which Mr. Williams analyses, we find capitalism accused of having destroyed communal spirit and purpose, for having frustrated what D. H. Lawrence called

> that instinct of community which would make us unite in pride and dignity in the bigger gesture of the citizen.

Such searchings after a communal spirit and purpose are clearly opposed to the bourgeois individualist attitude. A key term in such criticism has often been the "mechanical" as opposed to the "organic", but how often the ideal "organic" society has been visualised as some idealised pre-industrial society — either eighteenth century, Elizabethan, or downright medieval. Such nostalgia has been a persistent element in English thought from the Romantics to the so-called Classicism of T. E. Hulme and T. E. Eliot, from Cobbett to the Guild Socialists. It is, of course, necessary to analyse this dialectically, to recognise its increasingly reactionary implications in the changing context of history. For Southey and Cobbett, at the outset of Industrial Capitalism, it was perfectly natural to criticise society from the standpoint of the past—where else were they to get their standards of criticism from, before the advent of dialectical and historical materialism? When Southey said:

> Bad as the feudal times were, they were less injurious than these commercial ones to the kindly and generous feelings of human nature,

he was only making a point which was to find a place in the *Manifesto.* The implications of the pre-industrial cult in the mid-twentieth century are vastly different. It amounts to wishing away the new world which capitalism has irrevocably created with its forces of production which, for the first time in history, can ensure abundance of all things, including culture, for all. In particular it amounts to wishing away the glorious proletariat, which was born out of capitalism and which has already established over one-third of the world the only true basis of communal spirit and purpose: scientific socialism. Those of us who saw the film of Khrushchev's reception on the streets of Moscow after his visit to America, saw the Soviet citizens swarm to Khrushchev's car as spontaneously as children (with not a policemen in sight), were aware of that flowering of the human spirit which socialism begins to bring.

William Morris

It was the genius of William Morris that he foresaw such things long before the achievements of socialism had begun to make it obvious to all except those who won't see. Morris united the traditions of English cultural thought with Marxism and brought them down to earth. It is true that he was primarily concerned with the question of culture as the question of art, but the meaning he gave to the term art was far removed from "the Arts" or the romantic notions of the artist which grew up during the nineteenth century, on the basis of such factors as alienation of the artist in a society where art had become a petty commodity on the market.

It seems to me that what Morris meant is what we should mean when we talk of culture: the development of the human faculty for the execution of conscious creative purposes which may be achieved in activities outside what we normally refer to as art. Morris turned to socialism not just because socialism would provide the leisure

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and opportunities for mass participation in the arts in the narrow sense, but because socialism would lead to the transformation of the character of human labour itself from the routines of capitalist society, inspired neither by individual creativity nor collective purpose.

Perhaps I am juggling too much with the terms art and culture, but whichever one we care to use, it appears to me that Morris gave us the right perspective on what socialism could do for culture. Capitalism is the enemy of culture not only because it limits the participation of the people in spare-time artistic and intellectual creation but because it debases the aims and experience of work.

But it is more than seventy years since Morris linked the aims of art with the cause of the people—socialism. How can we create the democratic British culture in which he believed? What in concrete terms is the situation in 1960? If the future of culture lies with the working class, then what is the culture of the working class as it exists? What is the significance of the cultural revolution for the British socialist revolution?

In the past few years there has been more than one important non-Marxist work purporting to deal with one or other of these questions. Mr. Williams has a concluding chapter, "Culture and Society", on the contemporary situation, and we must await with interest his forthcoming book *The Long Revolution* (due for publication this autumn) in which he makes concrete proposals for the future.

There is also the well known *Uses of Literacy* by Richard Hoggart. But it seems to me that the arguments advanced by both men break down at crucial points because they are not based on a Marxist analysis of society and of the particular issues raised.

The Mass Media

The question which springs to everybody's mind about the state of British culture today is the influence of the "mass media". It is very important to attack the flood of brutalising and trivialising cultural material for which these are responsible. Richard Hoggart's book has some very good polemic against contemporary publications aimed at the working class. His demonstration of the force and viciousness of their assault on decent values is convincing, and his point that the attitudes such publications seek to inculcate are all calculated to "unbend the springs of action" in the people, is valuable. But the significance of this assault as a weapon which helps monopoly capitalism to continue its economic exploitation of the British workers escapes Mr. Hoggart. For him economic exploitation no longer exists—it has been replaced by what might be called cultural exploitation:

> Inhibited now from ensuring the "degradation" of the masses economically, the logical processes of competitive commerce . . . are ensuring that the working people are culturally robbed . . . this subjection promises to be stronger than the old because the chains of cultural subordination are both easier to wear and harder to wear than those of economic subordination. (pp. 200-1, Penguin edition.)

We cannot disagree that the working people are being culturally robbed, but to suggest that this has replaced economic robbery betrays a very shallow, very complacent view of society. It is because economic exploitation continues, because monopoly capitalism continues to own the means of production, distribution and exchange that the working people are culturally robbed.

While this position exists there can never be a working-class culture in Britain to more than a limited extent, because the working class will never be able to produce its own culture to more than a limited extent. They will have to continue to accept to a greater or lesser extent, the so-called mass culture diffused amongst them by the mass media in the hands of big business. This cannot change until the working class own the means of production, so that they can produce their own culture, not by using the mass media for their own purposes, but by providing themselves with those things on which the development of the creative faculties depends, and capitalism denies: education, facilities, leisure, and above all, a sense of worthwhile, collective purpose in daily life and labour.

"Producers of Culture"

Socialism is the only basis on which the full development of the creative faculties of the mass of the people over the whole range of human work and activity can begin to be realised. Those who put the future of culture on a different basis are doing their own aspirations a disservice. Mr. Williams, for example, is a much more constructive thinker than Mr. Hoggart, but he is a reformist. It is, of course, important to struggle on the immediate issues which affect culture—money for the arts, leisure, education, opportunities. But, as Marxists, we see this struggle as part of the struggle for socialism, and socialism is the stage in which these issues can be solved in more than a limited way.

Mr. Williams, in his recent broadcast to that infinitely conceited body, "The Fifty-one Society", made some admirable points about the crisis of British culture. But his suggestion that

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the solution lay in putting the press, television, the theatres and the film industry, etc., "into the hands of the producers of culture" was typical of social democratic illusion. (Mr. Williams remarks at one point in *Culture and Society* that "the argument between Morris and Webb, between communism and social democracy, still rages; neither has finally been proved right.") To what extent can these things be put into the "hands of the producers" without getting rid of capitalism? In any case, surely "the hands of the people as a whole" is where the media of culture belong, not in the hands of those who happen to produce cultural work under capitalism. A similar abstractionism permeates Mr. Williams's thought when he discusses culture in the sense of a "whole way of life". His great merit is that he is not on the side of the past, but of the working class and the future, but his idea of what a working-class way of life is and how we establish it as the British way of life are idealist in the Marxist philosophical sense.

> It is not proletarian art, or council houses, or a particular use of language: it is, rather, the basic collective idea, and the institutions, manners, habits of thought, and the intentions *which proceed from this* (p. 327, [my italics, *M.C.*]).

If the basis of a working-class culture is a "basic collective idea", then the process of establishing it does not involve changing the material basis of society, the relations of production, but diffusing that idea in the hope that the bourgeoisie will accept it and come to "concede the practice of democracy". Since ideas are primary to Mr. Williams he is able, at another point, to attribute strikes and riots to a "basic failure of communication" (p. 315).

Culture and Socialism

It is part of the struggle for socialism in Britain to show the British people that the fulfilment of their aspirations for culture is inextricably bound up with the success of the socialist revolution.

But supposing, it is sometimes said, the mass of the people have no aspirations for culture? Again it depends on what you mean by culture. The view of cultural perfection which underlies this is usually the diffusion of present middle-class culture. We ourselves may unconsciously fall into a similar error when we acknowledge, as we have to acknowledge, that the output of working-class literature is very small. One contributor to *Marxism Today's* discussion on "The Artist and Politics" felt that only one true working-class novel had ever been written, while Arnold Kettle closed the discussion with the sort of uncertain glimpse into the future of working-class art which suggests that there are few indications of its nature in the present. But literature is only one aspect of culture, and there are many working-class activities which provide ample evidence of cultural aspirations. These are generally collective or practical in character, and in this respect may be a more natural expression of a working-class way of life than the writing of novels.

This is not to underestimate the future of working-class literature, but its flourishing depends so much on the basis which only socialism can provide. Beyond socialism lies communism, in which the working class as we know it now will have disappeared. It is under communism that culture will be what the metaphor on which the word was originally based implies: the tending of a natural growth.

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The Apprenticeship System Today

J. Reid

THERE is little doubt that the apprenticeship system, which has virtually been the only vehicle in this country by which young workers could acquire a skill or technical training, needs to be urgently and fundamentally re-examined by the Labour and trade union movement.

Over the past few years a number of official and semi-official reports have been issued on this question, but all of them have been from the narrow confines of a ruling-class approach.

The truth is that the crisis in apprenticeship can't be abstracted from the general crisis of capitalism. British monopoly capitalism's failure to provide for young people the opportunities and facilities for acquiring the necessary skills for this new technological age is but the reflection of the fundamental contradiction of any dying society, namely its inability to develop fully the new techniques of production at its disposal.

However, this doesn't mean that we shelve this question until the achievement of working-class power in Britain.

It will be in the fight for the rights of young people to a decent job with training as well as for all the other interests of youth that we will win them as allies in the struggle. Also no responsible member of the Labour movement can be content to sit back and watch whilst the Tories allow our country to slip further and further back in the technological race.

In 1957 Britain had a total of 142,000 scientists and technologists. The Soviet Union it is estimated, in the same year, had 2.2 million.

We produce 11,000 scientists and technologists each year. The Government plan is to raise this figure to 20,000.

The Soviet Union in 1956 produced 70,000 engineers alone, and if you add to this others trained to our technicians' standard, the figure is 130,000.

In the seven-year plan they will increase the number of highly trained engineers by 90 per cent. The greatest increase will take place in "chemical technology, automation, computing engineering, radio-electronics and other new fields".

It is little wonder that even the bourgeois educationists are getting worried. J. F. Coales of Cambridge University has written: "I am bound to conclude that, if British productivity is not to be left so far behind that of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., that it can never catch up, we urgently need 500,000 trained engineers".

It might be argued that this is more a problem of higher education than apprenticeship. But surely apprenticeship should be seen as a form of higher education, and the system which has been the main, if not the only source, of technical and industrial training for youth should be re-examined in the light of the changes in modern industry. And shouldn't we fight to ensure that the new technologists and technicians should come from the ranks of working-class youth?

The A.E.U., in its evidence to the Percy Committee on Higher Technological Education in 1944, stated, "No field of recruitment will prove more fruitful than amongst the present-day working-class youths who select engineering as their trade, and enter upon an apprenticeship which today seldom leads to spheres higher than those of skilled tradesmen."

The Shortage of Apprentices

The problem of apprenticeship is one of quantity and quality.

The former would not be a problem in any sane society, for the shortage of apprentices is not caused by the non-availability of young people. On the contrary, the "bulge", the increase in the birth rate in the immediate post-war period, means that by 1962 929,000 youths will leave school, 52 per cent more than in 1956.

It is estimated that only one in five of these young people will get a job that requires a training. The Government-formed Carr Committee, in its report *Training for Skill,* was content with exhortations to employers to take in more apprentices. These are falling on deaf ears.

Tudor David, assistant editor of *Education,* the journal of the Association of Education Committees, has written: "On the face of it, it looks as though the big apprentice-employing industries

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—engineering and building—taking half the total between them—do not intend to expand their needs. Some large concerns (in civil aviation, for example) may take less." In the same article he further states: "Now there is obviously something odd about an industrial set up which lacks trained artisans but somehow prevents the shortage being made good. And it would be lunatic if this were to continue to be the position while we had, as we shall have in the next few years, a large access of first-rate apprentice material."

The other side of the coin, the content and form of apprenticeship, also needs to be re-assessed by our movement. I think that if we are to do this properly we must first of all look at what the craftsman is required to do after the completion of his apprenticeship. In this respect, one thing is clear from even the briefest examination of industry today, and that is, in many sections new types of work are developing which are breaking down the old craft divisions.

The old type craftsman is in practice being more and more replaced by what are essentially semi-skilled workers.

There is a mistaken belief that this is a fairly recent development with the advent of automation, but this process has been going on since before the First World War. A Ministry of Labour Enquiry into Apprenticeship 1925-26 stated, of the period 1814 to 1914: "Towards the end of the period . . . there was a pronounced decline in indentured . . . apprenticeship. The reasons for the decline may be found in the altered conditions of industry. The increasing sub-division and specialisation of processes and the greater use of machinery rendered it unnecessary for many workmen to become acquainted with a complete trade or even a complete branch of trade."

This process has, of course, accelerated tremendously in recent years under the impact of the new technological changes in industry. Mass production methods have inevitably led to the breaking down of production processes to relatively simple operations and, in general, to large production runs which mean repetition work on a very large scale.

In practice this means that the real basis of skill has shifted from the workshop floor to the planning engineer's department, the drawing office or laboratory, in other words to the preparatory stages of production. And that the real skill now required in industry is less of the manual type of the old craftsman and more technical.

The Employers' Approach

The impact of all the apprenticeship system in this country has meant that the employers have broken down the system into two main categories:

(a) They are training an "élite" class of relatively highly-skilled technicians and technologists. The apprentices in this category comprise a very small percentage of the total apprentice force and in no way meet the needs of a moderate level of industrial expansion. Usually these lads are trained in "company schemes", segregated from the broad mass of the workers, and are subjected to pressures and influences calculated to inspire "company loyalty". The following are the general forms their apprenticeship takes.

Sandwich courses, which usually consist of six months alternating periods of workshop practice and college training. The aim is to achieve a diploma or Higher National Certificate.

Graduate apprenticeships—Selected students serve two years in the workshop and then proceed to college for three or four years to take a diploma or degree.

1 - 3 - 1 *Sandwich course*—This course consist of one year in workshop, three or four years at a college or university and a final year of practical training in industry. The two years served in the workshop meets the demands of professional bodies for two years' practical training in industry as a qualification for admission.

(b) The Craft Apprenticeship is the category which embraces the overwhelming majority of apprentices. Here the apprentice serves five years to a trade which has largely been de-skilled by the technical changes in industry. Most of them will learn only a one-skill or what is in practice a semi-skilled job.

During their apprenticeship many of them will be confined to one machine or to a very narrow range of jobs, alternatively they will be pushed around a factory, shop or building site to help out or fill in gaps in the labour force and long before their time is out will be seen by the employers as production units.

There are a few who, through attendance at day release, or more often from attending evening classes three or four nights a week, secure a Higher National Certificate or a City and Guilds Certificate. The cards, however, are heavily stacked against them achieving this.

The Trade Union Approach

The bosses are quite happy to continue with this facade of apprenticeship for two reasons. Firstly, it does impart the necessary elementary training for their particular production methods. Secondly, it provides them with a rich supply of cheap labour.

But for the trade unions, there is every reason why they should and must challenge this set-up

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in the interests of our youth and for the development of our country's industry and economy.

Unfortunately some trade unionists can't see the wood for the trees and the whole question of apprenticeship for them has become obscured by so-called sectional interests. Let us give an example of what I mean by this. In the great centres of apprenticeship like the Clydeside, skilled workers occasionally call on their shop stewards to carry out a "show of apprenticeship lines". The object of this is to weed out any unskilled worker or a worker who has served an apprenticeship to another trade, who might have been put on to a skilled job. The "show of lines" is carried through by the steward accompanied by the oldest apprentice. It is possible and does indeed happen that they find an un-apprenticed worker who has been doing work defined as "skilled". He might have been doing this to everybody's satisfaction for a number of years. Yet if you argued that he has shown that he possesses the requisite skill to do the job, the time-served men will retort "we served five years at low wages, etc., etc., therefore this work it ours". So apprenticeship is often seen not as something which entitles you to a certain class of work and wages because of an acquired skill, but as a sort of apprentice purgatory where after serving a five-year sentence you are entitled to claim certain jobs.

This attitude is, of course, a reflection of the deep fear by workers of losing their jobs and status, particularly when the bosses are introducing new techniques and materials. However, I think it must be said that trade unions will be better able to safeguard the interests of workers young and old not by fratricidal struggles based on craft divisions of labour now obsolete, but by developing the unity and organised strength of all workers in each industry, and fighting to defend and advance all their interests when new techniques are being introduced.

In this context the unions should emerge as the champions of youth to a decent job, with training and opportunities for all.

Apprenticeship Demands

But then we come to the crucial question; what demands should the movement fight for on the question of apprenticeship, and trade training?

Here I will advance some propositions not with a feeling that they meet all the requirements, but more as an attempt at exploration, which might prompt others to think and draw much better conclusions.

Firstly, the whole system of apprenticeship should come within the jurisdiction of the Government, as part of the Ministry of Education. The object of the system should be to provide Britain's youth with the training, practical, technical and cultural required for this nuclear age.

Secondly, there are some obvious advantages in apprenticeship to an industry, e.g., apprentice builders, engineers, shipbuilders, printers, etc., and not sub-division trades as at present. Some people might argue that this is an age of specialisation and therefore such a proposition is preposterous. However, in the actual manual work involved in modern industry the degree of skill has in some respects essentially deteriorated, and a more general and wider range of skill and knowledge is required. An apprenticeship aimed at giving young people a basic and technical knowledge of an industry would meet these requirements and enable workers to be more adaptable. Apprentices in their last year might specialise in a certain branch of work but if that branch became obsolete then he or she could be re-trained for another branch.

The most serious difficulty in the adoption of such a scheme is that we are living in a capitalist society and that such a wide training might be used by employers against the separate unions.

For that reason such schemes would have to be accompanied with safeguards, agreed to by all the unions concerned.

Thirdly—legislation should be introduced to make it compulsory for employers to take a certain ratio of apprentices to the adult craftsmen. There should also be an insistence on the standard of training and conditions which employers must have the capacity to undertake. This would end the present ridiculous set-up where anyone can take on an apprentice irrespective of qualifications in terms of facilities for training.

Fourthly—Day-release and part-time education should be available to all apprentices at least to the age of eighteen. This was a recommendation of the 1944 Education Act, and is also included in the various national apprentice schemes agreed to by the employers and the trade unions. It is only mandatory in the scheme covering the building trade. The Government should give legal status to this demand.

Also where the apprentice is doing sufficiently well in his studies his part-time education should continue until the degree, diploma or certificate is achieved.

Opportunities for technicians' and technologists' courses should be open to all apprentices on the basis of their academic and practical progress.

It would be necessary to link with this demand the need for a rapid extension of existing tech-

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nical and county colleges and a programme of building new colleges in the appropriate centres. For even with the unsatisfactory number being released at present the "White Paper on Technical Education, 1956" stated that the colleges "were full soon after they opened and have been bursting at the seams ever since".

The content and form of existing technical courses also needs re-examining. The high proportion of failures in the National Certificate and City and Guilds courses whilst no doubt influenced by other factors indicate that something is wrong. The main criticisms are twofold. Apprentices complain that the courses are not related enough to their practical work and then teachers, particularly progressive ones, claim that the courses are too narrow and that part-time education, whilst dealing mainly with the technical knowledge required by industry, should be on a wider canvas.

Lastly, the age limits and the duration of apprenticeship should be much less rigid.

In most industries, twenty-one years is the maximum age for the completion of apprenticeship. With a five-year apprenticeship that has meant setting the commencement age at sixteen. With the school-leaving age at fifteen it means that young workers have a gap of one year in their systematic education, assuming that at sixteen on taking up an apprenticeship they would qualify for "day release" or some other form of technical education.

This gap is deplored by educationists as a serious drawback to their future education.

On the other hand, if a young person stays at school until seventeen they would find the utmost difficulty in getting an apprenticeship because of their age.

I can't see why the minimum age for starting can't coincide with the school-leaving age. Similarly on the duration of apprenticeship. Some consideration should be given by the unions to shortening the period in cases where less than five years might be adequate for training.

A programme such as this would show that the trade unions were concerned about the future of youth and the needs of our country's industry and economy. It would constitute a programme which, if implemented, would have far-reaching implications, and therefore would require to be fought for over a period of time.

Immediate Demands

There are, however, immediate demands which should be taken up.

The full effect of the bulge will soon be felt. The trade unions should champion the right of all these youngsters to a decent job, a responsible attitude in contrast to the irresponsible and wasteful approach of the Tories and employers who would condemn these young people to, at best, dead-end jobs or unemployment.

Where work is not available the Government should throw open the technical colleges to these young people. Emergency centres with the same quality of training should be built and the young people encouraged to attend with full maintenance grants until suitable work is found for them.

The unions should also fight for the immediate implementation of all apprentice agreements and schemes affecting trade training, day release, etc. Inadequate as these schemes are, their full implementation would be a considerable advance.

In the factories, shops and sites trade unionists should fight for better conditions and proper practical training for apprentices.

Bourgeois experts always talk about the duality of apprenticeship by which they mean that the young worker has to both learn and produce. In practice the bosses place the emphasis on production; we should place it on the practical training of the apprentice.

In some work-places the shop stewards have secured an agreement with the employers on a programme of training that ensures the apprentice gets an all-round experience in his trade within the limits of the particular trade or enterprise. But these are exceptions and in most places there is no systematic programme for apprentice training.

"Learn and Earn" was supposed to sum up the principle of apprenticeship. It is clear that if the bosses get their way the average apprentice will learn and *earn* precious little.

In a recent book on apprenticeship[1] produced with the help of a grant from the Ministry of Labour and National Service, we read the following: "On the other hand, some firms employ apprentices in order to use them as cheap labour rather than to train craftsmen."

The strike of engineering and shipbuilding apprentices spotlighted the scandalous wages paid to apprentices.

Wages are based on a percentage of the skilled adult rate. The unions in engineering and shipbuilding had submitted a claim to the employers in 1956 which proposed to substantially increase these percentages. The claim was rejected by the employers on seven occasions until, in fact, the lads took a hand in things themselves.

Fifty thousand apprentices were involved in the dispute. Their magnificent militancy and solidarity

1. *Apprenticeship*, by Kate Liepmann.

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was an inspiration to us all. It should also make us think about the force they would represent inside the trade union movement, with their youthful vigour and militancy.

Unfortunately only a minority are members of their appropriate trade unions. It's also unfortunate, to say the least, that there are adult trade unionists who discourage them from becoming members.

When I was starting my apprenticeship, I remember asking the shop steward (who was a left winger) to give me a form to join the union. He replied, "Don't worry about that, son, you will have plenty of time for the union when your time is out". However, being a young Communist, I insisted and got my form. I often wonder how many other youngsters have not insisted when met with a similar rebuff. This attitude in varying forms and degrees is not uncommon in our movement.

The ruling class has no such inhibitions. They are hell bent on brain-washing with their ideas the children of the working class almost from *birth*.

No reluctance on their part to recruiting our youth into their youth organisations, and if the parents are agreeable the youngsters can sign up as boy entrants to the armed forces to be trained to fight for the interests of monopoly capitalism.

Let there also be no inhibitions on our part; there's only one army for young workers, the army of the working class. As soon as a lad or lass starts work they are profit fodder for the bosses; just as soon it is necessary to win them for the trade union movement.

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The Communist Party's Policy on Nationalisation

(The following resolution was passed at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party on May 14th and 15th. The first section of the resolution has been cut somewhat, as it contains material which has previously appeared in "Marxism Today".)

THE attempt of the right wing of the Labour Party to revise the constitution; its attack on further measures of nationalisation; the difficulties of some of the recently nationalised industries; growing public criticism of some aspects of nationalisation, underline the necessity of examining this question in the light of recent developments.

Socialist Theory and the Socialist Aim

The Labour Party constitution of 1918 put as the basic aim of that party "to secure for the workers by hand or by brain, the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

This is in line with the programmes of the pioneer groups of Socialists in this country. The Social Democratic Federation, for example, affirmed in its programme:

> "The emancipation of the working class can only be achieved through the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange and their subsequent control *by the organised community* in the interests of the whole people."

Capitalist Nationalisation

Marxists always drew a clear distinction between the common ownership of the means of production, as a means of emancipating the working class, and nationalisation and municipalisation by the capitalist state or its subordinate bodies. When the Socialist movement revived in the late 19th century there was already state ownership of tramways, gas, electricity and water supply.

The policy of capitalist nationalisation and municipalisation was based on the proposition that some types of industries and services were natural monopolies. There could not be in the same street two competing gas companies or two competing electricity companies. (Though gas and electricity do compete with one another.) Because competition was inapplicable, such industries were natural monopolies which unless restrained would be able to charge exorbitant prices for their services, thus exploiting other capitalist industries. There must either be state or municipal control of their charges or state and municipal ownership of the services themselves. Hence the nationalisation or municipalisation of these services by the capitalist class itself.

The Reformist Mixture

The reformists (the Fabian Society and the right-wing majority of the I.L.P.) stood for a variant of this capitalist nationalisation. They regarded the piecemeal nationalisation of industry by the capitalist state (which they treated as "the people" or "the community") as the way to socialism. Compensation would be by way of state bonds, carrying a fixed rate of interest, which would be lower than the average profit paid on ordinary shares, so that there would be a surplus to improve the conditions of the workers and the services to the public. This was the conception with which two generations of workers in the Labour Party were familiar in the years before 1945.

Rescuing Derelicts

In the prolonged structural crisis of British capitalism between the wars some of the basic industries—railways, cotton, coal, steel, shipbuilding—fell into decay. They grew more technically backward than the industries of their main capitalist rivals. The capitalist groups which controlled them had neither the resources nor the desire to modernise them. So in the 1930's nationalisation became advocated as a means of rescuing those industries and spending public money on them in order to make them efficient. This was the policy which was advocated in Labour's 1945 programme *Let Us Face The Future.*

The main backward industries scheduled for nationalisation were railways (as part of the nationalisation of transport), mines and steel.

The British mining industry, with the exception of some new firms in developing coal areas, had fallen markedly behind that of its competitors. An International Labour Office report published

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in 1938 showed that it had fallen behind the mining industries in major capitalist countries in almost every respect.

Technically the railway industry had been marking time from the beginning of the century. It was now undergoing heavy competition from road transport, so that the nationalisation of railways only made sense as part of a national transport policy.

Wherever industries or companies in private ownership have to be drastically reorganised, especially if this involves large-scale capital expenditure, the obligations to the old shareholders have to be drastically written down. The old shareholders are given the alternative of giving up something or losing everything.

Yet the Labour Party fixed compensation charges for mines and railways without ever posing the question whether the nationalised industries could carry (i) the burden of compensation interest, and (ii) the burden of interest charges on the new capital being poured into these industries. (The Labour Party for a number of years was under the delusion that capitalism had entered an "era of low interest rates.")

Under the wartime Coalition Government there had been a number of enquiries into the workings of those industries, which had recommended some kind of reorganisation, under state supervision (for example, the Reid Report on the coal-mining industry).

It was the struggle of the progressive forces in the Labour Party which forced the Executive at the 1944 Conference to adopt the policy of nationalisation, which was incorporated in *Let Us Face The Future* (1945).

The immense support of the people for the Labour Party in the early post-war years, as well as the favourable international situation, would have permitted the Labour Party to carry out a more democratic type of nationalisation, if the leadership had been prepared to do so.

Bank of England

One of the first services to be nationalised was the Bank of England, which for many years had worked closely with the Treasury.

Beyond the appointment of a trade unionist, appointed by the Trades Union Congress, the composition of the governors and directors remains more or less the same. According to the Radcliffe Report, "the present distribution [of directors] is that three of them are partners or directors of merchant banking houses in the City, one is a deputy-chairman of one of the smaller clearing banks, and another chairman of a joint stock bank trading overseas; one is a member of the Trades Union Congress; and the others hold responsible positions in industry, commerce and shipping."

Sir Stafford Cripps, when Chancellor of the Exchequer of the Labour Government, boasted, "the Bank is my creature", i.e., responsible to the Government. This is not the view of some of the financial oligarchs in the Court and directors, who claimed equal rights with the Government in framing monetary policy. The Radcliffe Committee on Monetary Policy criticised this, and said:

> "It seems to us unrealistic to suppose that in the future, any more than in the present, the central Government will be prepared to disavow responsibility for initiating and trying to carry through an economic policy within the terms of objectives which we have outlined."
>
> "We are dissociating ourselves from the view that was explicit or implicit in more than one of the representations of other witnesses that the public interest requires that the central bank should be assured of complete independence from political influence. We do not share this view, however appropriate it might be to some different state system."

The Tory Government prefers to remain silent on this question, and the power of the Bank to bring pressure on a government pursuing a policy that is disliked by the City oligarchs is still there.

Prices Under Nationalisation

The role that the nationalised industries could play in the post-war capitalist economy was never discussed in any realistic fashion. The original Labour Party conception was that both the privately owned industries and the publicly owned would be subject to price and material controls. Gradually, however, the controls over private industry were lifted and the monopolists were able to push up prices as far as the market would permit. Thus the price of all materials and equipment supplied to the nationalised industries went up to the limit, while the prices they were allowed to charge the privately owned industries were severely controlled. Witness the fact that throughout the whole period prior to the introduction of oil as a fuel, British coal prices were kept below the European level and British railways were for a number of years (before road transport expanded once again) prevented from raising their freight charges. In this way the privately owned industries were allowed to prey upon the nationalised industries.

Management Under Nationalisation

The managerial apparatus of the nationalised industries was integrated with the managerial

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apparatus of monopoly capitalism as a whole. People who had been managers under private capitalism remained. The top boards were largely staffed by the top managerial elements of the private industry, plus directors from other industries, with a number of trade union officials.

In his book *Power at the Top,* Mr. Clive Jenkins gives the background of the members of the boards of the principal nationalised industries as follows:

TOTAL OF MEMBERS	272
Company directors	106
Regular Army officers	5
Central or local government officers ..	15
Labour, Co-op. and trade union representatives	47
Technical and professional managers ..	71
Landowners or farmers	9
Universities, voluntary organisations ..	19

The Money-Lenders' Return

Because most of the nationalised industries were not permitted to earn a surplus which would have enabled them to plough back some resources for capital development, recourse had to be made to the money-lenders for new loans. These were borrowed either directly from the capital market (as in the case of the electricity supply industry) or from the Government, which raised the resources from the Budget surplus or by borrowing.

Here are the surpluses earned and the interest charges paid in recent years:

	Trading surplus (before deducting depreciation) £m	Interest charges £m
1948	118	57
1950	195	91
1952	276	118
1954	348	148
1956	337	156

(The difference between the trading surplus and the interest payments is absorbed by depreciation. Indeed, it is insufficient to meet depreciation in full.)

To sum up, the difficulties of the nationalised industries (operating on capitalist public utility principles within a capitalist framework), were aggravated by—

1. The payment of excessive compensation for industries which were in a technically backward state and which required immense masses of new capital for their further development.
2. The price policy, which prevented these industries from accumulating a surplus large enough to enable them to plough back something for capital development. Hence their excessive dependence on borrowed money.
3. The top managements were largely drawn from the previous privately-owned industries and other capitalist enterprises.
4. The use of those industries as stabilisers tended to upset their capital development plans and led to loss and waste.
5. The Labour Party's feeble application of the policy of road-rail integration, and the Tory Government's subsequent rejection and disruption of that policy, has placed the nationalised railways in an impossible position. The Tories, by refusing to accept a national fuel policy are placing the National Coal Board in a similar position.

Results in Efficiency

The nationalised industries are at least serving the monopoly capitalists well. The British electricity supply industry, doubling its production every ten years, is one of the most modern in the world. Thermal efficiency (which measures the amount of electricity generated for a given amount of fuel) has risen from 20.91 per cent in 1948 to 26.10 per cent in 1959.

The coal industry shows a good increase in over-all productivity, rising by 30 per cent from 1947. For faceworkers the rise is 34 per cent.

It can therefore be said that nationalisation has rescued a group of basic industries which (with the exception of electricity supply) were a drag on the rest of the capitalist system, and has rendered them more efficient to serve the industries and services controlled by the great private monopolies, and to a much lesser extent, to serve the general public.

Although most existing nationalisation took place without great opposition from the capitalists and broadly serves their interests, this does not mean that the workers' movement as part of the campaign for socialism should not fight for (i) the ending of the exploiting of those industries by the monopolists; (ii) the all-round improvement of the conditions of the workers in them; and (iii) a better service to the public.

1. There should be a clear policy for the various industries and groups of industries. This means a national fuel policy which will cover coal, oil and atomic energy and which will proceed from the necessity of the British people making the best possible long-term use of its resources.

There should be no hasty going over to oil until questions of the effect on the balance of payments if oil ceases to be in British control, and also the possibilities of a rapid increase in price are investigated. The social cost of a transfer to oil (mass unemployment in some mining areas) has to be borne in mind, as well as its commercial cost to individual capitalist firms. The

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Coal Board must be pressed to push ahead with the development of new fuels, and with the utilisation of coal as a raw material from which valuable chemical products can be extracted.

In the transport industry there should be a return to the policy of road-rail integration which should involve (i) the cutting down of C. licences, and (ii) the re-nationalisation of commercial road transport. The over-development of commercial road transport can mean gross congestion on the roads while the railways are running below capacity and will entail greater capital expenditure on road development than would otherwise be the case.

2. We should insist on the lifting of the interest burden on those nationalised industries which were in a state of crisis when taken over. The burden of interest on British Railways and on the National Coal Board should be transferred to the Exchequer and those industries should be given a fresh start.

3. The prices charged by the nationalised industries to the privately owned industries should be reviewed. The price of electricity has risen much less than the price of other commodities and services (its prices are 40 per cent above the level of pre-war.) This compares with a 172 per cent increase in general retail prices, and there is good reason to believe that the monopoly capitalists are getting their power cheaper than the capitalists in Western Europe. There is a case for some increase in freight charges on the railways and on the roads.

4. The practice of joint consultation between the managements and the unions should be revised from top to bottom. The workers must be given a real voice in the elaboration of policy and not presented with cut-and-dried schemes on a "take it or leave it" basis.

Why Attack the Monopolies?

A Socialist attack on the great privately owned industries, each of which tends to be dominated by a handful of large firms, must be conducted on vastly different lines from those which were applied in the capitalist nationalisation policy of the Labour Government. There, the criterion was to provide cheap raw materials and services for the majority of the industries of the country which remained in private hands, ignoring the needs of the workers and the public. This type of nationalisation presupposes that the sector of publicly owned industry is restricted, and is subordinate to and preyed upon by the private sector.

The aim of a consistent Socialist attack on the monopolies is to stop the exploitation of the workers and the public; to end the domination of the economy by their drive for the maximum profit; to break their political and economic power and, on the basis of the public ownership of the great firms, to plan the economy in order to secure full employment, high wages and salaries and shorter hours, and also to secure the maximum development of the social services, on the basis of the highest possible production, secured by the greatest possible application of science and technology. The full achievement of Socialist nationalisation as the basis of a planned Socialist economy presupposes the capture of political power by the workers, at the head of a broad class alliance of the British people. However, such a stage can only be reached as the result of a persistent campaign and struggle conducted against the monopolies and near monopolies.

Year by year there has been a steady increase in the profits of the great privately owned companies.

Their gross trading profit has increased from £1,847 million in 1948 to £2,254 million in 1952 and £3,119 million in 1958.

(Contrast this with the trading surplus of the nationalised industries which grew from £118 million in 1948 to £276 million in 1952 and £341 million in 1958.)

The non-trading income of these companies plus trading profits earned abroad (which is additional to the trading profits mentioned above) grew from £327 million in 1948 to £463 million in 1958.

In addition to the above there is the steady growth of income (mainly in the form of interest) of the companies engaged in insurance, banking and finance. This has grown from £274 million in 1948 to £397 million in 1952 and £635 million in 1958.

It is worth noting that while the total profits of the companies (excluding those in insurance, banking and finance) went down slightly in 1958 as a result of the recession, the income of the companies in insurance, banking and finance went up by £32 million.

At the same time there has been a gradual reduction of the rate of taxation falling on companies and a reduction of the total amount paid on the larger sum of profits. Thus the taxation paid by the companies (excluding insurance, finance and banking) was £758 million in 1948, £1,024 million in 1952 and £916 million in 1958. (This downward trend of company taxation will not be greatly affected by the recent small increase in profits tax.)

There has been in 1959 an increase of £308

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million in the profits of *all* companies (the finance companies are not separated from the others in the statistics available at this moment).

The Social Services

By squeezing increased production out of the workers and by refusing to reduce prices; and by clamouring for reduced taxation at the expense of the social services, the large companies are greatly increasing their reserves for expansion, and so the dividends and luxury expenditure of the shareholders.

This is seen particularly in the sphere of the people's housing, where the expenditure on publicly owned housing has fallen from £338 million in 1955 to £241 million in 1959, while expenditure on private housing (usually for sale) has increased in the same period from £241 million to £335 million. It is notorious that because of slacker supervision the profits on private house building tend to be larger than the profits on council houses.

The same tendency is seen in the resistance of the government, amidst boasts of increasing prosperity, to increase the standard rate of old age pensions. The Tory refusal to extend their differential pension scheme into the higher range of income is a deliberate attempt to leave the higher income groups of workers or professional people to the tender mercies of the great insurance companies.

Never in the post-war history of Britain has the gap between the earnings of a worker in full employment and the benefits which he or she receives when on retirement pension, sickness, unemployment or industrial injury benefit, been so great as it is today. The so-called Welfare State is moribund.

While the towns and cities of Britain are being covered by thousands of new office blocks—the prestige building of the larger companies—not half a dozen new hospitals are under construction, and despite the slightly better rate of school-building, it will be many years before the buk of Britain's schoolchildren will be in up-to-date schools with modern amenities.

Despite the mounting production and profits, the government, under the influence of the monopolists, is refusing to raise the school age to sixteen even in ten years' time.

By direct pressure on the government and by high-pressure salesmanship the monopolists are trying to convince the mass of the people that expenditure on whatever goods are being lavishly advertised, is more important than the social services and social building.

The Nationalisation Controversy

The right-wing Labour leadership has stated its criterion for nationalising further industry, namely, that it "is failing the nation", i.e., that it is falling behind in efficiency and is not squeezing large profits out of the workers.

The Socialist criterion for nationalising the great industries is that under the leadership of the monopolists they are exploiting the workers and the majority of the nation; that they are increasing the income of functionless shareholders at the expense of the workers (wage and salaried alike), that they are resisting the expansion of the social services; that they are responsible for colossal waste (compare the £400 million spent on advertising with the £700 million spent on education), and that their drive for maximum profit makes impossible the planned increase of the country's productive power and the planned improvement of the conditions of the people (by all-round improvement in the social services as well as in wages and salaries).

In the compromise formula adopted by the Labour Party Executive, it is stated:

> "It [the Labour Party] is convinced that its social and economic objectives can be achieved only through the expansion of common ownership substantial enough to give power over the commanding heights of the economy, state-owned industries and firms, producers and consumers co-operation, municipal ownership and public participation in private concerns. In recognising that both public and private enterprise have a place in the economy, it believes that further extension of common ownership should be decided from time to time in the light of these objectives, according to circumstances, with due regard for the views of the workers and consumers concerned."

This compromise resolution is subscribed to by people who attach different meanings to it, and is a masterpiece of ambiguity.

The "further extension of common ownership" could mean little more than a reaffirmation of the programme of the last General Election which called for the nationalisation of steel, some sections of road transport and water, and would leave the most powerful monopolies unaffected.

When the policy of state-shareholding was laid down in *Industry and Society*, it was specifically stated that such shareholding was to give the state a share in the profits and was not aimed at securing control. Yet it is included in the "common ownership substantial enough to give power over the commanding heights".

What does the reference to "producers and consumers co-operation" mean? It could mean that the Labour Party gives general support to the

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efforts of the Co-operative movement to win in competition with the monopolies and chain stores an increased share in the trade and production of the country. In that case it is supporting the existing position. Or it could mean (i) that the state is prepared to assist the Co-operative movement in its competition with the monopolists, or (ii) that the state takes over a certain industry or service and entrusts its management to the Co-operative movement. The latter two positions are never likely to be adopted by Gaitskell and company.

It should be noted that this declaration puts the preservation of a considerable private sector as one of the *ultimate* aims of the movement, i.e., the great privately controlled monopolies are to continue to exist indefinitely.

It is one thing to aim at the common ownership while recognising that some privately owned industries and services where small and medium firms are important, will exist for a fairly long time. It is quite another thing to say that private enterprise will have a *permanent* place in the economy as is done in the phrase "both public and private enterprise have a place in the economy".

The phrase "expansion of common ownership substantial enough to give power over the commanding heights of the economy" is generally held to constitute a left-wing victory, but as it stands, it is not a very weighty one.

It should not be forgotten that Mr. Gaitskell in his speech at the Blackpool Conference declared that the basic industries were already under public ownership, while Mr. Douglas Jay declared that "the public needs power over the commanding heights of the economy, which in Britain are mainly publicly owned already". Interpreted in this way, the phrase "commanding heights of the economy" could mean no change in the present situation.

When Lenin used this phrase first he meant the banks, all large-scale industries, and the state monopoly of foreign trade (in Soviet Russia).

According to the Jay-Gaitskell interpretation, the metal-using industries (engineering and electrical goods, shipbuilding, vehicles—including aircraft—and other metal goods), which employ 4¼ million workers, contribute over 33⅓ per cent of Britain's industrial production and 51 per cent of its exports are not to be classified as commanding heights.

Nor is the chemical industry and allied industries which contribute over 7 per cent to British production (as much as the mining industry), employ 550,000 workers and have 9 per cent of Britain's exports.

The constructional industries (mainly building and civil engineering) contributing 12 per cent to Britain's production and employing 1½ million workers, are not on the Jay-Gaitskell definition on the commanding heights either.

The great privately owned financial institutions, the banks, insurance companies and building societies are not included. Clearly, the right-wing definition of "commanding heights" is meant to confine the publicly owned industries to the same restricted area as at present.

The Drive for Nationalisation Now

The campaign for the extension of nationalisation must be based on consistent attacks and exposures of the great monopolies.

The gross defects of the present type of nationalisation within the framework of capitalism were not inevitable, even under the Labour Government. The situation was favourable for a more democratic type of nationalisation in which the nationalised industries would have had managements who genuinely believed in nationalisation, would not have been burdened by excessive compensation, would not have been subordinated to the great private monopolies and would have allowed infinitely greater scope to the unions and the workers to determine the policy of the industry.

A Labour government which had freed itself from the rank cowardice of the right wing; a government with strong trade union and popular support, would only be able to defend the interests of the workers by challenging the great firms which are the basis of Tory economic and political power.

The trade unions should be won, not only to retain Clause 4 but stand firm for the emancipation of the common people from every form of capitalist rule, but should also actively campaign for the national ownership of the large firms in the industry or industries which a given group of unions covers. This advocacy should include demands for the more effective participation of unions in those industries, from the factory floor upwards.

Our fight for immediate demands, and our propaganda for socialist principles needs to be accompanied by an exposure of the exploitation of the workers (wage and salaried alike) in the great firms, together with an exposure of the monopoly prices which they charge and the high profits which accrue to them in consequence.

All attempts to camouflage capitalist reality by suggesting that full employment inside the capitalist framework, has now finally been secured; to pretend that a steady rise in the standard of

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life of the people is now inevitable; to treat the standards of the best-paid workers (won in heavy struggle) as typical of the whole class; to conceal the growing concentration of economic and political power in the hands of powerful financial groups and to confine the movement to tiny reforms, must be exposed as a contemptible and servile defence of monopoly capitalism.

The Right Wing and the Monopolies

In seeking to justify its policy of refusing to attack and expose specific monopolies and to demand their nationalisation, the right wing has pointed to the danger of their launching powerful advertising campaigns against the Labour Party. In fact, this cowardly policy did not prevent a powerful and unscrupulous campaign being waged against the Labour Party by the representatives of the very firms which the right-wing leadership was anxious to conciliate, e.g., the Institute of Directors campaign. The great advertising resources at the disposal of the monopolists are now, as a matter of course, being used, not only to market particular products but to "sell" the monopoly capitalist system as the best of all systems. This propaganda must be faced and defeated.

The large firms are increasingly seeking to defend themselves against public attack and criticism by instituting employees' shareholder schemes, pensions and sickness schemes and other fringe benefits. In their battle to consolidate their position the large firms are using a fraction of their monopoly profits to weaken the workers' loyalty to the trade unions and shop stewards' committees in the factory, and to the workers' movement generally, and to create an alternative loyalty to the firm. The increasing amount that they are prepared to spend in this way is their tribute to the reality of the challenge (despite all the efforts of the right wing) which they face. To refuse to attack the monopolies because they may counter-attack is gross political cowardice.

Industries in which the large firms are dominant and which are ripe for nationalisation include:

The Steel industry, whose return to private enterprise has only meant larger profits for the shareholders coupled with the refusal of the industry to undertake expansion unless heavily subsidised.

The Oil Refinery industry, one of the most modern and profitable industries in Britain, which needs to be co-ordinated with the other fuel and power industries so that a genuine national fuel policy can be operated.

The Chemical and Petro-Chemical industries, in which gigantic profits are made and which supply raw materials to every British industry.

The Aircraft industry, whose huge dividends and capital expansion in the recent past have mainly been derived from the subsidies paid by the British taxpayer.

The Motor industry and its ancilliaries, whose uncontrolled development in the search for maximum profits might plunge Britain into a crisis similar to that in which its American counterpart plunged the U.S.A.

Key sections of Engineering concerned with the development of electronics and automation in all their forms, and also those sections concerned with developing the peaceful use of atomic energy.

The Shipbuilding industry which earned huge profits before the recent recession and before the recovery of West Germany and Japan, but which has failed swiftly to apply the latest methods in ship construction.

The Building industry, faced with immense construction tasks, should have its largest firms taken over so as to speed the development of the latest methods of construction and to prevent huge profits being made out of the construction of houses for the people and of social service building generally.

The Building Materials industries. These industries are highly monopolised and are in a position to charge excessive prices, thus squeezing large profits out of public and private building.

The Textile industries. In most of the mills in the older sections of these industries (cotton and wool) work is carried on in old buildings most of which were constructed in the nineteenth century. Welfare conditions are primitive. The industry is being carried on in a hand-to-mouth way, with state support for re-organisation. There is no guarantee of any adequate re-organisation. The employers are content to drift along in traditional ways, extracting profits on the assumption that it will last their time.

Public Ownership of Urban Land and the great landed estates. This is necessary if the replanning of our towns and cities is to be decided on the basis of the public interest rather than the profit drives of land and building speculators.

Control of Finance. The great financial institutions, the joint stock banks, the great insurance companies, the investment trusts and the building societies are playing a decisive role in the direction of investments and in the shaping of economic and financial policy generally. In addition to the re-organisation of the Bank of England, already mentioned, the joint stock banks should be nationalised and the others should be subjected to an increasing measure of state control.

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Nationalisation and the Co-operative Movement

The right-wing utilisation of the idea of co-operative ownership must be exposed for the bare-faced fraud that it is.

There is scope for an enormous extension of co-operative ownership and management under socialism, but the right wing has no intention of supporting such a policy. They do not intend to go beyond the policy of encouraging supporters of the Labour movement to become individual members of the Co-operative movement, with a view to encouraging that movement to compete more aggressively with the multiples. To put this in the party programme is to commit a future Labour government to do precisely nothing new about assisting Co-operative development.

A Labour government must recognise Co-operation as the appropriate form of public ownership for many activities, and must actively promote the development of the Co-operative movement by advancing cheap loans to help its expansion; by encouraging all forms of co-operation among farmers, and by bringing into public ownership sections of light industry and of distribution, and by handing them over to the Co-operative management.

Co-operators should be assured that there will be no hasty taking over of co-operative sections in various industries and services unless and until the experience of the actual working of nationalisation shows this to be desirable and necessary in the public interest. At the same time the Co-operative leadership should abandon their opposition to any public ownership of services and activities, which are now mainly privately owned, merely on the ground that co-operative enterprises also exist in these sections of the economy.

Unity in Action

The fight for a Socialist policy in the Labour Party makes it necessary to achieve unity of action with Labour Party workers, in the factories, unions and co-operatives, in all sections of the peace movement and in the struggle for colonial freedom.

It is imperative that party members discuss continuously with Labour Party members how best to advance the existing struggles of the workers, and to open the way forward to a Socialist Britain, obtaining their support for lifting all bans and proscriptions.

It is essential that members and sympathisers should make the most careful study of the theoretical questions which are dealt with in the party press and in party literature, like the *Socialism Today* series, so equipping themselves for the fight for socialism in Britain, so helping to defeat those who would sell Socialist principles and weaken the British working class at a moment when the socialist challenge is being felt by the defenders of monopoly capitalism, and when socialism and communism are being built over one-third of the world.

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Lessons of History

All students of history and politics are recommended to read the recent book on *The Observer and J. C. Garvin,* 1908-1914 by Alfred M. Gollin of the University of California, published by Oxford University Press. The Trustees of *The Observer* had persuaded Miss Viola Garvin to make available her father's private papers which have been extensively used.

What was the secret of Garvin's meteoric success? How did it come about that the circulation of *The Observer,* under his Editorship, rose from some 5,000 in 1908 to over 60,000 four years later? How did it become a centre of Conservative influence? It is, perhaps, unlikely that the author is aiming at substantiating the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state, but the Education Department of the Communist Party is, to say the least, grateful. The secret of Garvin's success, explains Mr. Gollin, is not just in the length or technical skill of his Editorials. But, above all, their influence came from his possession of top secret information made available by inspired leaks from persons in key positions in state, Government and the Tory (Unionist) Party—"early, accurate, and *confidential* information".

Success came first with his intervention early in 1908 on the issue of naval rearmament. The Liberal Government was pledged to reduction in arms expenditure. Garvin campaigned for a big efficient navy against the German menace. In this he acted as direct mouthpiece for Admiral Sir John Fisher, the First Sea Lord.

The Admiral was no respector of persons. His three R's of war were "*R*uthless, *R*elentless, *R*emorseless", and they were not reserved for purely naval activity. "Officers of whatever rank or distinction who failed to agree with his policies saw their careers interrupted and ruined without mercy" (p. 33). The Admiral had already begun in 1905 "the practice of sending to Garvin confidential and even secret documents of every kind about the Navy, Invasions and Raids, Admiralty Policy, War Plans. . . ." (p. 35.) In 1908-09 his leaks flowed straight into *The Observer* Editorials. "Fisher gave me magnificent secret stuff, chapter and verse . . ." wrote Garvin to Lord Northcliffe, his proprietor, on February 2nd, 1908.

It is not surprising to find Garvin and *The Observer,* a few years later, (1912-14) ardently aiding the revolt of the "non-partisan" State against the constitutionally elected Government on the issue of Irish Home Rule. By the beginning of 1912 the Tory problem was how Home Rule could be averted:

> "Since the passing of the Parliament Act, Unionists possessed no constitutional method of thwarting the Home Rule plans of the Liberal-Irish coalition in the Commons . . . the House of Lords could delay but not destroy the Home Rule Bill" (pp. 393-4).

On July 27th, 1912, delegates of every Unionist association in the United Kingdom met at Blenheim Palace, seat of the Duke of Marlborough:

> "The Duke of Norfolk, who was the premier peer and Hereditary Earl Marshal of England, Bonar Law, leader of the Conservative Party, F. E. Smith and Carson spoke with such determined abandon that few men could doubt the fact that the Unionists were thinking seriously of armed resistance to prevent the Government of Ireland Bill from encompassing Ireland and Ulster" (p. 403).

As the months passed the plot thickened. Intrigue and demonstration passed into open military rebellion led *from within the key positions of the armed forces* supported by Tory leaders and our well-known "democratic" press. The author describes the Curragh revolt of 1914, when the Government ordered certain officers, he writes, to move to Ulster to protect military stores and establishments. Sir Arthur Paget, Commander-in-Chief in Ireland offered that officers domiciled in Ulster could "absent themselves from duty during the period of operations . . . and after a time be reinstated". As he so modestly puts it (p. 422) "Unsoldierly conferences and consultations followed". Or, in a franker moment: "the army, as an instrument of the Government's will in Ireland lay broken in Asquith's hands".

J. C. Garvin and his loyal *Observer* "began to hammer at the Government because of its planned 'pogrom against Ulster'" (p. 423). *The Observer* condemned "the Government's 'provocation' of Ulster in the most desperate terms" (p. 425).

The decision of the constitutional Government became "a provocation". The state, in all its "neutrality", turned against the Government's decisions when they even mildly endangered the position of the ruling monopoly capitalists.

J. K.

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